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JEAN-JACQUES
ROUSSEAU
MORALIST

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MORALIST

By
CHARLES WILLIAM HENDEL
MACDONALD PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL

'C'est celui du moraliste . . .'
(DIDEROT, on the Style of Rousseau, *Œuvres*,
vol. ii, p. 339)

*'La vérité que j'aime n'est pas tant
métaphysique que morale.'*
(ROUSSEAU to DU PARC, 25 June 1761)



VOLUME II

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ABBREVIATIONS

- H. Hachette edition 1905, Paris, J.-J. Rousseau: *Œuvres*.
- C.G. *Correspondance générale de J.-J. Rousseau*, Dufour, Paris, 1924 seq.
- Annales.* *Annales de la Société J.-J. Rousseau*, Geneva, 1905.
- Vaughan. *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, C. E. Vaughan, Cambridge, 1915.
- Corr. Litt.* *Correspondance littéraire de Grimm*, &c. Paris, 1877-82.

CHAPTER XIII
ENCYCLOPEDIST NO MORE: THE LETTER TO
D'ALEMBERT

FOR some time it had been impressed upon Rousseau that he owed it to himself to produce a work for the public. Shortly after his establishment at Mont-Louis, Deleyre had written, moralising over the quarrels of the philosophers in Paris: 'our writings are only one moment of our life, and the best moment at that. So, dear citizen, don't give up the idea of publication.'¹ Since the *Journal Encyclopédique* had falsely reported, as forthcoming, 'The works of the Abbé de St. Pierre, by Rousseau', Deleyre asked him to announce his real intentions with regard to that undertaking. Of course, Deleyre was always hoping, too, to see the *Letters of Julie* in print. And Mme d'Houdetot, likewise, had been urgent about publication and begged him not to spend too much time on her personal copy of *Julie* so that he would not be taken from the production of useful work for himself. Both these friends told him, moreover, that they were having to stand up for him against the gossip of Paris.² This made him anxious to vindicate himself with a good piece of writing. For, in truth, he was still known, at that time, only as the author of some operas, the two *Discourses*, and a few articles in the *Encyclopedia*. All that he had been doing besides was not suspected by the public, the work on St. Pierre and his *Political Institutions*, already in manuscript, the *Julie* composed through Part 4, but known only to a few close friends, and the various other essays on morality and education and religion which were barely in their beginning stages. Certainly some of all this ought soon to be brought to a conclusion.

Characteristically enough, the work destined to come out was none of those already long-planned and under way. It was a new and unexpected outburst, prompted by the occasion, very much as had happened in the case of the two earlier *Discourses*. Rousseau could still find his genius only when he chanced upon a public adversary and a cause. The seventh volume of the *Encyclopedia* had recently come to hand containing an article on *Geneva* by D'Alembert. The ministers of Geneva were excited over it because they were described as 'socinian', which was

¹ From Deleyre, Jan. 3, 1758, *C.G.*, vol. iii, No. 457.

² From Mme d'Houdetot, Jan. 3, 7, 9, 28, Nos. 458-460-461-466. From Deleyre, Jan. 25, No. 469, 'Je suis obligé de soutenir thèse pour vous chaque jour. Oh, ma foi, venez vous défendre, car je ne sais pas tenir tête à des femmes'.

intended as a compliment, but it meant damnation to them, and especially to those of their number who were affiliated in the public mind with that great enterprise of Diderot and D'Alembert. This same article also drew Rousseau's fire, but particularly for another reason. It recommended to the people of Geneva that they should institute a theatre of comedy, and it exalted such a theatre as a veritable school of morality. Now he was full of ideas of his own about the moral education of the will and the conditions favorable to morality, particularly having people immune from the worldly interests and practices of great-city life. Yet here was D'Alembert trying to set up another Paris in Geneva. It had already become something of a fashion for Parisian society to frequent Geneva—now, apparently, fine plans were being made for their amusement, in that city of Calvin. The genius of contemporary drama, Voltaire, had become a power in the city, courted by the intellectuals from every quarter, and even visited by D'Alembert coming from the great distance of Paris to pay his respects. There was as yet no theatre to produce the work of Voltaire. The institution had, therefore, to be created. At the sight of so much fuss being made about the profane Voltaire, Rousseau may have been jealous; but he was certainly indignant at the idea of making over the native institutions of the Republic to suit that man—it was a travesty of the Platonic ambition to constitute a republic so that it might be a fitting place for a Socrates to live in and rule. That the proposed change of institutions and life of the people of Geneva could really be brought about by a few wits, with articles in an *Encyclopedia*, Rousseau could hardly have believed possible, in view of his adherence to the views of Montesquieu. Nevertheless, he perceived that the French visitors were setting the intellectual tone and that D'Alembert's appeal to moral values would further commend the project, and he feared that even though bound to fail, the very attempt to introduce the novelty must surely make trouble for a whole generation. The Citizen of Geneva thus felt himself to be called upon to ward off this attack on the constitution of the Republic. 'I have applied myself to work again,' he sent word to Mme d'Houdetot, and, 'since I have not been working without pleasure I have hopes that it will not be without success and that the call to be useful to my country—it is that which has put the pen back into my hand—will make me recapture some remnant of the old warmth.'¹ Indeed, the fire of genius burned brightly for over a month, sustaining him against the rigors of winter and acute physical distress. A *Letter to D'Alembert* was composed in an

¹ To Mme d'Houdetot, Feb. 13, No. 471.

access of inspiration, and it was finished sometime toward the end of March.

Before entering into the discussion of the projected theatre, Rousseau took D'Alembert to task for troubling the peace of the clergy of Geneva to no good cause. For he had published to all Europe the opinion obtained by his personal conversations with the ministers of the Gospel that some of them were 'perfectly socinian', since they repudiated the doctrine of eternal punishment. Rousseau freely admitted that he himself was unable to believe such a doctrine because it was incompatible with his idea of God's High Justice, and he explained himself further, in a foot-note, saying that he could never bring himself to believe truths or mysteries actually contradictory to reason, although there were, of course, some 'mysteries', even in geometry (D'Alembert's own science), such as the 'primitive notions' which serve as the foundations of all human certitude, that reason cannot touch but can 'just barely perceive'. In any case, an individual's faith depends ultimately upon what his reason allows to be possible or impossible, and therefore no one ought to be held to believe any doctrine on authority. Even if any passage of the Scripture itself, sublime book as it is, were to convey an idea of God that is unworthy of Him, it would have to be rejected as an alteration of the word of God in its human rendering—exactly, be it noted, as Plato had felt obliged, in his ideal Republic, to reject the fables of Homer that demeaned the Gods. Thus Rousseau came to the rescue of the so-called socinian ministers, and he declared: 'that they are philosophic and tolerant does not mean that . . . (they) . . . are heretics.' Hence it was most unkind of D'Alembert to stir up the notions of sect or party within the body of that clergy. Soon the peaceful members of the clergy of Geneva would be inspecting each others' beliefs, instead of leaving that invidious task to God. But enough of that dangerous issue. The only hope, now that the article was out, would be that the ministers themselves might display the gentleness and humanity that belong with the true Christian virtues.¹

Rousseau was alive to the danger of theological animus and intolerance, against which he had already expressed himself in his letter to Voltaire. And he had direct evidence of the situation in Geneva. Jacob Vernes, one of the men whom he had met there during his own visit in 1754, was in occasional correspondence with him. This young minister was a man of letters eager to be ranked among the intellectuals. He had associated himself with a *Journal* and secured a few songs from

¹ H. vol. i, pp. 181-6.

Rousseau in order to lend some prestige to his periodical; and he was very ambitious, apparently, to figure as a contributor to the *Encyclopedia* along with such men as Rousseau, Diderot, and D'Alembert. Rousseau at the time of his visit seems to have promised to bring his articles to the attention of the two editors. And Vernes was most enthusiastic over Rousseau. He presented him, just before his return to Paris, with a copy of Pope's *Moral Epistles*, and he burst out in praise of his article on *Political Economy*.¹ Now when the article on *Geneva* appeared he was troubled because of his connections, and he asked Rousseau to undertake a commission for him with D'Alembert, regarding that peccant article. In his reply Rousseau told him of his own present isolation from those friends in Paris and he expressed something of his own sentiments about the remarks of the article as regards religion: 'if the article of which you speak is indiscreet and reprehensible, it is assuredly not offensive', and further he confessed that he had 'a little aversion for the details to which such (discussions) might lead,' and in general to any notion 'of subjecting conscience to any formulas'. He went on, then, to give his own profession of faith, so that Vernes might know where he stood on this matter:

'I have religion, my friend, and I hold fast to it. I do not believe that any man in the world has as much need of it as I. I have passed my life among unbelievers without allowing myself to be shaken; loving them, esteeming them very much, and yet not being able to stand their doctrine. I have always said to them that I did not know how to combat them, but that I would not believe them. Philosophy, not having in these matters either bottom or shore, lacking the primary ideas and elementary principles, is nothing but a sea of incertitude and doubt, whence the metaphysician will never extricate himself. I have left reason there, then, and I have consulted nature, that is to say, the internal sentiment which directs my belief independently of my reason. I have left them to arrange their chances, their lots, their necessary movement, and while they were building their world from a throw of dice I was seeing, for my part, that unity of intention which showed me, despite them, a unique principle. It is just as if they had said that the *Iliad* had been formed by a fortuitous cast of characters and I had replied very resolutely: Such things can be, but they are not true; and I haven't any reason whatsoever for not believing in them except the fact that I don't believe in them. Nothing but prejudice, that—they say. Let it be so; but what can reason,

¹ Correspondence with Vernes during 1754-6, see *C.G.*, vol. ii, Nos. 181, 206, 239, 263, 287, and communication through Dr. Tronchin, No. 301.

clever as it be, do against a prejudice that is more persuasive than itself? More arguing without end against that distinction of the two substances (matter and spirit); and more persuasion on my part that there is nothing in common between a tree and my own thought; and what has appeared delightful to me in this is to see them going back upon themselves, by virtue of their own sophisms, to the point of preferring to endow stones with sentiment rather than grant a soul to man.

'My friend, I believe in God, and God would not be just if my soul were not immortal. There, it seems to me, is everything that is essential and useful in religion. Let us leave all else to the disputers. As regards the eternity of punishment, that could not be made to agree either with the fact of man's weakness or with the justice of God, and so I reject it.'¹

And Vernes was disposed to argue some of these points with him, finding him not orthodox enough in his faith. He insisted on the word of God in the Bible as a revelation and disparaged the private conscience and judgment of man. This attitude was disturbing to the moralist who had recently sketched in his *Moral Letters* a justification for the supreme authority of conscience. It revealed an issue between them, though they were united in opposing the contemporary materialism. And if that temper got abroad in Geneva, thanks to the article by D'Alembert, it boded ill for his country. So he did not press the matter in his own *Letter to D'Alembert* but drew attention to the moral questions concerning the theatre.

On to the play, then, and its boasted moral effects. Many questions started up for consideration in regard to this proposal of a theatre for Geneva. Rousseau's mind turned back to what he had read in the books of Father Lamy, teaching Plato's notion of the extraordinary sensitiveness of the human soul to artistic representations, whether they depict the nature and actions of Gods or heroic men.² Other modern religious writers had made similar animadversions upon the theatrical art, and they had touched the youthful and susceptible spirit of Rousseau in his early days.³ What they said, however, interested him in

¹ To Vernes, Feb. 18, No. 474. The *Lettre à D'Alembert* was begun sometime before Feb. 13 (see No. 471). This personal letter to Vernes was dated Feb. 18, but its wording implies that the letter received from Vernes to which it was an answer had been at hand for some time before it was attended to—hence it is reasonable to assume that Rousseau wrote the opening remarks of the *Letter* with what Vernes had revealed to him in mind. The subject was still on his mind on March 25—To Vernes, No. 490.

² Cf. B. Lamy, *La Rhétorique ou l'art de parler*, 5th ed., pp. 114, 280, 407; *Nouvelles Réflexions*, ch. 3, IV, VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI—all against Poetry.

³ For example Pascal, sect. 1, No. 11—on comedy as dangerous to Christian life, especially comedy of love.

the theatre, and though they intended to convey a fear or aversion of it, they had, in the first instance, only lured him into ambitions to play a part so dramatically, to write words and music for the stage. Now that course was run, and the aversions were coming out, and all the genius of his romantic pen was to be turned against the theatre. The effects of such art must certainly have been one of the topics he had intended to treat in *La Morale Sensitive*, on the composition of which he had failed to make any headway, being more naturally inclined to express his meanings in a vivid, personal form than in a systematic treatise. But now these ideas of such long vintage were suddenly seen to be relevant in an actual case, the establishment of a theatre at Geneva. He found a grand role to play. He would 'imitate the ancients' and be of service to his country, and he would apply the ideas he learned from Plato to the modern republic of his own dreams. And to acknowledge his discipleship he meant also 'to explain Plato' on this subject by appending a composition of material from the relevant books of the *Republic* and the *Laws*, entitled, *De l'imitation théâtrale*.

Dramatic spectacles are essentially amusements. Work and duty are the lot of every man, whether as 'a father, a son, a husband, or a citizen', and such things can be enjoyed in the performance. Only when man is not well employed, or suffers from bad conscience, does he begin to crave other enjoyments. Discontent with himself, the pall of idleness, the forgetting of simple and natural pleasures, such are the occasions when he goes out seeking foreign amusement. Thus he betakes himself, for instance, to the theatre, where, though seemingly in a multitudinous society, he is really isolated from every one and enjoys his irresponsibility and sheds tears or laughs over fictions that make no moral demands upon him. The theatre makes its appeal to people who are already distracted from their duties in life and therefore it can only amuse or afford play for the emotions and not discipline the will, which is the essential thing in morality.

It is by reference to such considerations that the good or evil effects of the theatre must be decided. Too often its eulogists or critics have judged merely on the basis of their opinion of the drama itself, its content or its art. They overlook, then, the fact that the piece is always made for an audience. The important thing is what the theatre means for those before whom its representations take place, and what effects it has upon them. In order to render a true decision on this question, therefore, one must make a thorough scrutiny of the order of life of the

particular people concerned, and in this case, the people of Geneva. 'Man is one, I grant, but man modified by religions, by governments, by laws, by customs, by prejudices, by climates, becomes so different from himself that we must no longer search amongst ourselves for what is good for men in general but rather what is good for them in such and such a time and country.' The *Letter to D'Alembert* is to be far more than a discussion of dramatic art and morals, but a complete portrayal of the constitution and life of the people of Geneva, an ampler version of what he had sketched in the *Dedication* to his *Discourse on Inequality*.

In the theatre 'the principal object is to please', not to be 'useful'. The drama must, therefore, 'favor the likings' of the spectators, and it cannot correct or even moderate them. The passions are played up, even those which in actual life would be odious and contemptible, and they are all given a coloring to make them appeal. The one thing of no interest on the stage is reason—witness the wise Stoic, always a bore in tragedy, and a ridiculous fool in comedy. Hence the theatre can merely follow and embellish the existing sentiments and morals of the people, never change them for the better. Its general effect is 'to strengthen the natural character, to augment the natural inclinations, and give a new energy to all the passions'.

Now this corroboration would seem to be bad for those already bad, and good for those who are good, except for this that the exciting of the passions is never good in any case. The theory of Poetics maintains, of course, something to the contrary, that the drama 'purges the passions in exciting them. . . . How is that? Must we become temperate and wise by beginning with being furious and mad?' No, rejoin the partisans of the theatre, the point is rather that the true art of tragedy is 'to excite in us the sentiments opposed to those attributed to the personages' of the stage. This seemed special pleading and bad faith, which one can easily verify by consulting the state of his own heart at the end of a tragedy. 'Does the emotion, the disquiet, the working-up that one feels in oneself and which is prolonged after the piece, does this announce a disposition very ready to surmount and control its passions? The lively and moving impressions to which we get accustomed, and which return upon us so frequently, are these really fit to moderate our sentiments at need? Why should the image of the troubles that spring from the passions efface the image of the transports of pleasure and of joy that one also sees to arise, and that the authors take pains to embellish still more in order to make their pieces more pleasing? Do they not know that all the passions are sisters, that one by itself suffices to summon out a thousand of them, and

that the combatting of one by the other is only a way of rendering the heart more sensitive to all? The sole instrument that serves to purge them is reason; and I have already said that reason has no effect at all in the theatre.'

And in a spirit of perversity he added that 'the theatre purges the passions we do not have and foment those we have. There's a cure well applied, isn't it?'

The theatre can never realise the moral purposes ascribed to it by its eulogists, no matter how fine be the art. There are but three agencies commonly affecting morals, the force of law, the rule of public opinion, and the attraction of pleasure. The constraint of law is of no avail in an amusement; nor is public opinion, because the theatre takes its cue from that opinion; appeal alone is useful in this case, but the only effects seem to be that of drawing people there more often.

It is said, of course, that the theatre 'makes virtue loveable and vice hateful'. As if men did not love such virtue and hate vice by their own very nature and reason in actual life, before ever they witness such things on a stage! And with regard to the evil and crime, are they not rendered actually less horrible than in reality because of the colors in which they are always painted? Surely it is not possible for the stage to produce in us sentiments other than those of our nature, or to teach us to judge moral beings otherwise than we naturally do in life. The beauty of virtue is surely first discovered to men in their own hearts. 'As for me, let them treat me as more wicked still for daring to maintain that man is born good,—I think so, and believe I have proved it: the source of the interest which attaches us to what is good, and inspires us with aversion for the evil, is in ourselves and not in these pieces. There is no art whatsoever for producing that interest but only for making use of it as already there. The love of moral beauty is a sentiment as natural to the human heart as the love of oneself; it does not arise at all from the arrangement of scenes; the author does not bring it, but only finds it there; and from that pure sentiment which he flatters, there arise the sweet tears which he makes flow'.

It is not really a question of creating in man the right sentiments or principles. The difficulty is wholly in getting him 'to act consistently with his principles and to imitate people he really esteems. The heart of man is always right as regards everything that does not relate personally to himself. In quarrels of which we are purely spectators we take at once the side of justice, and there is no act of wickedness whatsoever which will not give us a lively indignation, so long as we do not derive some advantage from it; but when our personal interest

is mixed up in it, our sentiments soon become corrupted, and it is only then that we prefer the evil that is useful to ourselves to the good which nature makes us love.' But what can dramatic spectacles do to help mankind on that score? They actually get people accustomed to looking on a scene without feeling any obligation to act, and to having a love of a virtue always envisaged in someone else. This only aggravates the tendency to exempt oneself personally from all genuine obligations but to hold others, instead, rigorously to them. The 'lessons of virtue for the public' given on the stage seem a great boon to the wicked man who likes 'to oblige the entire world to be just, excepting himself alone, in such wise that each one shall render to him faithfully what is due him, and that he renders no one what he in turn owes'. A public instructed by the theatre is a fine field for exploitation by those who take advantage of probity.

Tragedy leads, it has often been said, to 'pity by way of terror'. But such pity, what is it? 'A passing and vain emotion, which lasts no longer than the illusion producing it; a remnant of natural feeling soon stifled by the passions, a sterile pity which occupies itself with a few tears, and has never produced the slightest act of humanity. . . . In giving tears to these fictions we have satisfied all the rights of humanity; . . . whereas those who are unfortunate in actual life would require of us pains, comfortings, consolations, deeds, which would associate us with their troubles, which would at least cost something to our indolence, and which we should only too gladly be exempt from doing.'

Tragedy presents persons at too great a remove from ourselves to move us to an imitation of its heroes. 'The theatre has its own rules, its maxims, its separate morality, as well as its language and vestments.' On the other hand, comedy can bring characters near us and paint morals more as they are, which seems a recommendation in its favor. However, it cannot correct vice. For one thing, we never recognise our own vices in those represented: 'an ugly face is not ugly at all to him who bears it.' We are further prevented from seeing ourselves in the case by the fact that comedy usually employs ridicule and shows its characters so much beneath ourselves that we are untouched by the points of criticism. Rousseau agreed with Muralt, then, in holding that the stage can never be of any value for public morality because it never represents things in their true proportions. The theatre is, and can never be anything else, but an affair of pleasure, an amusement.¹

The French drama, the best of its kind, afforded plenty of

¹ The preceding argument, constituting one essay in the *Letter*, is on pp. 186-94.

examples to illustrate those criticisms. It had been said of this drama that crime is always punished in its pieces. If that be so, then, these tragedies must be 'pure fables' and make no moral impression on the spectator who, when he discerns so plainly the intent to instruct, regards the whole thing as the invention of the poet. Of course, the effect of a tragedy must not be judged solely by that of the catastrophe but by what it conveys in moving to that end. However, what one actually observes is that the criminals who are eventually to be punished are staged in the earlier scenes in so favorable a light that all the interest is for them. The exploits of brigands like Catiline have a heroic coloring. And such impressions outlast far the moral eventually drawn in these classics. It is, indeed, otherwise in the drama of the contemporary Voltaire, especially in his *Atrée* and *Mahomet*—Rousseau was honestly confessing the admiration which he had felt from his youth on. In his present mood he was disposed to eulogise particularly the character-drawing of Thyestes: 'He is not in the least a courageous hero: he is not a model of virtue; one could not say either that he is a rascal; he is a weak man, and for all that, interesting, by the very fact that he is human and unhappy. It seems to me, too, that by such things alone, the sentiment he arouses is extremely tender and touching; because that man comes very close to each one of us.'¹ That is, Rousseau recognised himself. The *Confessions* say that without being aware of it he here represented himself and his own situation—this 'Thyestes' was, so to speak, his own first appearance on the scene.²

Another appearance follows almost immediately. After a short discussion of the difference between the ancients and the moderns, and upon the slight effect of tragedy upon morals for either good or bad, because of its remoteness, Rousseau took up Molière's *The Misanthrope*, and displayed himself again, in that role.

A year past, in the hey-day of his quarrel with Diderot, he had received a slight shock from Deleyre who appealed to him to make an end of the affair, saying, 'You will become (pardon, I beg you) a consummate misanthrope, and your friend will no longer be the philanthrope'.³ Since then a like fear about him had been intimated several times by Mme d'Houdetot. Such qualms in his friends betrayed the kind of opinion that was gaining currency about himself—that he was in very truth something of a misanthrope. He was now determined simply to defy that opinion, and defend what men and women of the

¹ Op. cit., p. 198.

² *Confessions*, H., vol. viii, p. 355.

³ From Deleyre, Mar. 31, 1757, C.G., vol. iii, No. 358.

social world would consider to be 'the misanthrope'. Molière had played up to the worldly view in his comedy—so he would attack Molière and criticise his *Misanthrope*.

'Who then is the misanthrope of Molière? A good man who detests the morals of his age and the wickedness of his contemporaries; who, precisely because he loves his fellow-men, hates in them the ills that they do to one another and the vices of which these ills are the work. If he were less touched by the errors of humanity, less indignant over the iniquities he sees, would he be more human himself? That is like trying to maintain that a tender father loves the children of others better than his own, because he is irritated by the faults of his own and never says anything about the others. . . . He (the Misanthrope) says, I admit, that he has conceived a frightful hatred of the human race. But on what occasion does he say that? When, outraged at having seen his friend contemptibly giving the lie to his own views and deceiving a man who asked him for them, he even sees himself made sport of at the height of his anger. It is natural that that anger should degenerate into a rage and make him say then what he does not think in cold-blood. Moreover, the reason which he gives for his universal hatred amply justifies the cause of it:

'Some because they are wicked,
And others, for being complaisant to the wicked'.

'It is not of men, then, that he is the enemy, but of the wickedness of some few and the support which it finds in the others. If there were neither knaves nor flatterers, he would love the whole of humanity. There is no honest man who is not a misanthrope in that sense; or rather, the true misanthropes are those who do not think thus; for, at bottom, I do not know a greater enemy of mankind than the friend of all the world, who, always charmed with everything, encourages the wicked all the time and, by his culpable complaisance, flatters the vices whence arise all the disorders of society.'

Yet the so-called 'misanthrope' had to be made ridiculous in the comedy. Molière had him play the fool, to make the parterre laugh. As a result he acts entirely out of character. He shows 'puerile fury' over matters that ought never to move him at all. His real passion is a 'violent hatred of vice, born of an ardent love of virtue, and embittered by the continual spectacle of the wickedness of men. So it is only a great and noble soul that is susceptible of this passion. . . . Moreover, that continual contemplation of the disorders of society detaches him from himself in order that he may fix all his attention on the

human race. That habit elevates, enlarges his ideas, destroys in him the base inclinations which nourish and concentrate upon self-love; and from that concurrence there arises a certain force of courage, a superiority of character which only gives a hold, at the bottom of his heart, to sentiments worthy to occupy it.' This was J.-J. Rousseau speaking for himself.

But he conceded, too, the faults he had come to know in himself. 'That is not to say that the man is not always man; that the passion does not make him often weak, unjust, unreasonable; that he does not sometimes spy out, perhaps, hidden motives for the actions of others with a secret pleasure at seeing there the corruption of their hearts; that a small evil often sends him into a great rage, and that a clever wicked fellow purposely irritating him can make it come about that he seems wicked himself.' Of such characteristic faults Molière knew how to make very good use. Nevertheless, he had really a very imperfect grasp of the person he was depicting when he made him fly up into rage over things utterly 'puerile' and over injuries to his own 'private interests'. 'That a false woman betrays him, that unworthy friends dishonor him, that feeble friends abandon him, all that he ought to suffer without a murmur: he knows men.'

There was the picture of himself betrayed by Mme d'Épinay, dishonored by Grimm, and deserted by feeble friends like Diderot, and some others; there he was with his faults as well as his virtues; and there, too, was the ideal of conduct for him to follow in this situation. Now it so happened at about this time, that he received a last note from Mme d'Épinay protesting against his having paid her gardener, contrary to their original understanding about the conditions of his residence at the Hermitage. And Rousseau now replied with a letter, the very existence of which he seems to have forgotten afterwards when writing the *Confessions*. He asked her not to insist upon reimbursing him for the gardener's wages and especially not to count as anything the little extra sum for the time beyond his stay to the end of December. 'As regards the fifteen days which remained until the end of the year, you will agree that that would not be worth the trouble deducting. God forbid that I should pretend to be quits thus for my stay at the Hermitage. My heart cannot put at so low a price the attentions of friendship, but when you have paid the price yourself, never has rental cost so dear.' These were the words of one grieving, and injured, but not essentially ungrateful. And the reason for the persistence of this sense of being wronged was as follows: 'I hear the strange talk that your correspondents at Paris indulge in regard to myself, and I judge by that what you yourself say, perhaps, a

little more honestly, at Geneva. So there is pleasure in hurting? And hurting people one has had for friends? Let it be so. For myself, I could never relish that kind of pleasure, even for my own defense. Go ahead, say what you like. I have no other reply to make to you except silence, patience and a life of integrity. Further, if you have some new torment in store for me, be quick about it: for I feel that you might not have the pleasure very much longer.¹ This was not quite suffering without a murmur, but it was a far remove from the fury and bitterness that made him seem a *misanthrope*.

In the play of Molière precisely such a situation was made the occasion for ridicule. The comedian had to make the galleries laugh, so the misanthrope was made utterly laughable in his noble indignations. Rousseau wanted to see a new and more instructive *Misanthrope* composed, about a man of virtue who was never so ridiculous; a taciturn and silent man who hated public vices and the wickedness of people in general; who never defamed anyone, but, if he thought ill of him, would tell it directly to the person himself. Such a play would be more instructive than the drama of Molière which only indulged people in their easy morality, which is 'a certain mean between vice and virtue', so that they think they are good when they get along without being downright rascals. Of course this new and improved version of *The Misanthrope* would never succeed with the public!

If the best of all the comedies of the great Molière amounts to a ridiculing of virtue, what is to be expected of the inferior ones written by men of no character or genius? Minds are indeed corrupt when they interest themselves in making laughter out of acts of crime. The curtain must be dropped on such comedy.

There were, however, some contemporary authors of genius and of much better intention, deserving of notice. These instruct much, but they bore people more; one might just as well go to a sermon. This was a cutting criticism of his friend Diderot, whose *Natural Son* (with its moralising about the wicked alone being solitary) had not been much of a success with the populace.²

The successful contemporary theatre was on the whole decadent. To make their appeal the playwrights resorted to a heightening of 'the interest of love'. They competed with each other in giving 'a new energy and a new coloring to that dangerous passion.' The only successes since Corneille and Molière

¹ To Mme d'Épinay, Feb. 20, 1758, *C.G.*, vol. iii, No. 468.

² The preceding discussion of French drama comprises pp. 194-208.

were 'such romances under the name of dramatic pieces'. Now Rousseau had learned from experience how romance can affect the moral life, and from that knowledge he proceeded to expose the ill effects.

'Love is the reign of women. They are the ones who of necessity dictate its law, because, according to the order of nature, resistance is theirs, and men can only overcome that resistance at the expense of their liberty. A natural effect of this kind of piece is then to extend the rule of sex, to render women and young girls the preceptors of the public, and to give them the same power over the spectators that they have over their lovers. Do you think, Sir, that that order of things is without any inconvenience, and that in augmenting with such care the ascendancy of women, men themselves will be the better governed? There may be in the world some few women worthy to be hearkened to by a good man; but is it of women in general that he ought to take counsel? And might there not be some other way of honoring their sex without at least demeaning our own? The most charming object of nature, the one most capable of moving a heart that has any feeling and leading it to good, is, I confess, a loveable and virtuous woman; but that heavenly being, where is she to be found? Isn't it pretty cruel to contemplate this being with so much pleasure at the theatre only to find such different ones in society? However, the seductive picture has its effect. The enchantment caused by those prodigies of wisdom turns to the advantage of women without honor . . . the young man insensately rushes to destruction, thinking all the while he is becoming wise.'¹

It must be noted by the way that the ancients in general held woman in great respect, witness Virgil and Plutarch; but they honored their modesty more by keeping still about any other excellences; the woman least talked about was the best. On the contrary the moderns esteem that woman most who makes the most noise in the world. This reflects in their drama. Women of the world really know nothing, 'although they judge concerning everything; but in the theatre, wise with the wisdom of men, philosophers thanks to their authors, they eclipse our own sex in its own peculiar talents: and the imbecile spectators go naïvely to learn from women what they have taken the pains to teach them. . . . Run through most of the modern pieces; it is always a woman who knows all, who teaches everything to the men.'

Another effect of this romantic character of the drama is to

¹ Cf. Montaigne on 'the soul discharging its passion on false objects when true ones fail'. *Essays*, bk. 1, ch. 4.

give an ascendancy to youth over age, which is contrary, again, to very ancient wisdom. 'Who can doubt that the habit of seeing old men always as odious personages on the stage does not aid in making them be scorned in society?' That there is some such influence is apparent from the difference of manners between Paris and the provinces where an aged figure and white hairs are always respected. Why the frequenters of the theatre in the great cities are even used to seeing a woman's triumph, 'dragging at her chariot a Nestor' whose age is no proof against her charms! That view of things is not good for the conduct of life.

The exclusive interest in the passion of love has other effects which ecclesiastical writers have often noted as dangerous. The usual reply to them is that the mode of representation of love in the theatre makes everything right—the passion is commonly sacrificed to duty and virtue, and, in case it is a culpable passion, it is punished. But this does not meet the charge Rousseau himself has to bring. It is not that the theatre directly represents and inspires criminal passions, but rather that it 'disposes the soul to sentiments that are too tender, which one satisfies afterwards at the expense of virtue. The sweet emotions that one feels there have of themselves no determinate object, but they make the need for one arise; they do not exactly give love, but they prepare for one's feeling it; they make no choice of the person one ought to love, but they force us to make such a choice.' Thus wrote the unhappy romancer, wise after the fact, realising that the early *Letters of Julie* had disarmed his soul and left him helpless before the charms of 'Sophie'.

He illustrated this truth by a play in which D'Alembert and he had acted together several years before, Racine's *Bérénice*. The spectators were made to feel contempt, at the outset, for the weakness of a Roman Emperor who was distraught between the claims of his mistress and his patriotic duty and was making effeminate complaints about his distress of soul. At the end of the play what happened? Every one had come to pity this despicable creature. The spectators felt a sympathy with him in his passion. Their hearts murmured in secret against the sacrifices necessary for the laws and the country. Indeed, by the time the personage most affected, Bérénice, had mastered her own tears, the audience was just beginning to weep. 'Titus did nobly to remain Roman; he is the only one of that opinion; all the spectators themselves have espoused Bérénice.'

Even if this result were disputed and it were maintained, instead, that the ultimate interest of the spectator was in Titus as a man, master of himself, still that contention only supports the principle Rousseau has had in view throughout this *Letter*,

namely, that 'sacrifice made to duty and to virtue always have a secret charm, even for hearts that are corrupted: and the proof that *the sentiment is not in the least the work of the piece* is the fact that they have it *before the piece begins.*' The moral sentiments are pre-existent in mankind. And so the ultimate point of his criticism is that the theatre is designed to *give more play to other sentiments than the moral*: 'the pictures of love always make more of an impression than the maxims of wisdom, and the effect of a tragedy is completely independent of that of the dénouement . . . Let one paint love as one will: it seduces, or it is not love.' The author of *The Letters of Julie* who had offered them to Mme d'Houdetot was here making a confession he had not made to St. Lambert. And he went on farther in self criticism to point out how the lovers are always made 'models of perfection' (excepting in the case of the *Misanthrope*, and in another work, Lillo's *Merchant of London*, much admired of Diderot), and that they are just so much the more alluring, because of the perfection.

A conclusion has now been reached. 'Whether one deduces from the nature of spectacles in general the best forms of which they are capable, or whether one examines all that the lights of a century and an enlightened people have done for the perfection of our drama, I believe that one can conclude from these divers considerations that the moral effect of the spectacle and the plays can never possibly be good or salutary in itself since, to count only their advantages, one finds there no sort of real use without disadvantages that surpass them. But, in consequence of its very inutility the theatre which can do nothing toward correcting morals can do a great deal toward altering them. In favoring all our penchants, it gives a new ascendancy to those which already dominate us; the continual emotions we feel there enervate us, weaken us, make us more incapable than ever of resisting our passions; and the sterile interest we have in virtue only serves to throw a sop to our self-love without constraining us to put it into practice.'¹

There are other effects of the theatre not directly relating to the representation itself. The ecclesiastics of Geneva have always feared, and rightly, an introduction of the love of luxury and show and dissipation. The theatre offers too easy a recourse for people who are inclined to forget their duties and themselves. Whether such an alien preoccupation is good or bad, depends, of course, upon the nature of the serious occupations which are interrupted. In large cities where so many people have nothing

¹ The criticism of romance and the empire of woman, and this conclusion, pp. 208-16.

to do but get into mischief and where they are obsessed with the love of pleasure and lust, it might be good policy to attract them to the pleasures of the theatre, simply to prevent their evil-doing out of it. But that argument does not hold for small towns. The evil-doers are there under a direct observation. The private citizen is there judged more by what he really is and does than by appearances. A more direct moral control obtains without recourse to devious means. And the people have not only character to begin with but also genius, for the men of science and letters who shine at Paris are never the products of that great city itself, but of the despised provinces whence they have come, bringing with them their useful discoveries and inventions. True genius has true simplicity. Such an one ignores the flattering way of honors and fortune, and never dreams of seeking these things; nor does he make comparisons of his merit with others but sets his own standard, and draws entirely from his own resources. He is more likely to be discovered in 'the tranquil solitude' of the countryside where it is possible to extend and assimilate one's ideas.

The blessed memory of such an environment diverted Rousseau for a moment from his argument. It was the picture of a mountain near Neufchâtel, covered with houses but each one having a plot of land around it so that the inhabitants of the town enjoyed at once 'the calm retreat and the delights of society'. The hardworking peasants, free of all burdensome taxes imposed from above, spent their time at the work of their hands and in the exercise of their natural inventiveness, especially during the long winters. Useful books they had a-plenty, and they were fairly well educated. Their arts of music, painting, and singing were traditional. They possessed an astonishing mixture of sharpness of wit and simplicity. More than these features he could not recall from his youthful observations, noting particularly that he was not then able to appreciate such things as the character of their morals and their society. But now suppose a theatre were established in the centre of such a town of mountaineers. Their work, instead of being their amusement, would soon be felt to be less enjoyable. They would then fail to exhibit the same keenness of mind at it, and hence a diminished efficiency in their labor. Then, the need of fine clothes for such an affair would mean increased expenditure. The prices would have to be raised on their own products; buyers would go elsewhere; income would diminish. The maintenance of the theatre would become a tax upon the whole population. The women would soon want to be seen themselves rather than to see the plays—hence luxury, and the melancholy

rest all follows, the continual, downward course of a people who 'ruin themselves the instant they want to shine'.

Thus, by this imaginary experiment, it may be seen that quite apart from any moral or immoral effects of dramatic spectacles in themselves, the establishment of a theatre might very well become an evil to the type of people for whom it is designed. The paradoxical result seems to be this—it had been broached before in the *Preface to Narcisse*—'when the people are already corrupted, spectacles are good for them, and they are evil when the people are intrinsically good'. And how about the people of Geneva? Well, comedy will only do them no harm if they are so bad to begin with that nothing worse can possibly happen to them.¹

D'Alembert had suggested that the comedy might be made safe for Geneva by laws forcing the comedians to be good. This was brilliant logic in the eulogist of the theatre: plays are proffered for the morals of the people and laws for the players thereof, to make them moral. This spelled a gross ignorance of the limits of the power of law. Any one can devise laws to function in a society of men of common sense and genuine equity; even the merest scholar can draw up a code as pure as the *Laws* of Plato; but the real difficulty in any particular case is so to adapt the code to the people for whom it is intended and to the things concerning which the legislation is made that its execution is certain to follow from the actual forces present. To impose laws without regard to these considerations is only to degrade them. It is equally important to realise that in matters of morals and justice one cannot draw up rules by oneself as in statute law. And 'if laws sometimes do influence morals, it is only when they draw their own force therefrom'. This the ancients had appreciated, especially Plato who commended the Spartan practice of calling upon the citizen in a preamble, not so much 'to observe the laws as to love them'. The moderns in general, with their love of gain and commerce, cannot rise any longer to such heights. But it is only on condition that they will do so at Geneva that they can safely welcome the institution of a theatre in their city.

The opinion of a people can never be directed by any laws, penalties, or other coercive measures. A good example of this Rousseau pointed out in the attempts in France to change public opinion in regard to duelling. A 'tribunal of marshals' had been set up, after much failure on the part of royal authority, to act as a supreme court on points of honor. A preferable name would have been 'court of honor' rather than 'tribunal',

¹ The imaginary Swiss town and its economy, pp. 216–21.

because the latter savoured of traditional ways and means. This court had to have judges of great authority on the matters in concern, and so, quite rightly, in a warlike nation, these judges were marshals of proved valor and capacity. It was highly important that they should enjoy a prestige of their own and that the supreme power of the State be not invoked. The sovereign should never render any arbitrary decisions of his own but put the court of honor in his place and even above himself, as a body to whose high decrees he himself would be submitted. It would never do for this body to begin by condemning all duellists to death indiscriminately, for that would create a shocking opposition between the respect for law and honor, 'for the law cannot oblige any one to dishonor himself'. 'A sovereign edict will never change a poltroon into a worthy soul when once the people have passed such a judgment upon him.' Nor is it ever wise to invoke the law of God, that men ought not to fight one another, simply because 'the civil law is not in the least a judge of sins; and every time the sovereign authority interposes in such conflicts of honor and religion, it will be compromised in both directions.' Further, even a compulsion upon all duellists to have recourse to the tribunal would be unavailing because they would feel the case against duelling to be judged in advance, not expecting that the marshals would ever authorise a duel. However willing a man might be to accept reparation for himself and to pardon his enemy, he cannot be so easily moved to such a settlement when some one close to him is believed to be dishonored, 'a father, sister, wife, or mistress'. No marshal or laws can then give real satisfaction to honor, and a fundamental opposition exists there between the duty of the citizen and that of the man. Witness the strange contrariety of this 'that one would go to applaud at the theatre the same Cid whom one would go to see hanged at the Grève'.

'So it is a fine to-do; neither reason nor virtue nor the laws will prevail over public opinion so long as one will not seek out the art of changing it. And, once more, that art has nothing to do with violence.' What, then, is to be done, in this case of duelling? Rousseau offered his suggestion in accordance with the idea of human relationships embodied in his doctrine of social contract. This idea had been applied to the case of national wars; it seemed relevant to private wars or duels as well. 'It seems to me we must submit absolutely all personal combat to the jurisdiction of the marshals, whether to have them judged, or prevented, or even permitted.' This submission without reserve on the part of all to those whose judgment is trusted is the essential step of governance. The right to

engage in combat may often be necessary, if only, for one thing, to convince the public that the judges themselves are truly independent and not simply the tools of the prince impatient to stamp out such practices. By virtue of this universal recourse to a court, secret challenges would without doubt fall into disrepute, since any real violation of honor could be honorably redressed. The lives of some fine men might be lost at the outset, but an infinity of others spared thereafter, for under the existing repressive system the blood-letting contrary to law only serves to engender more of itself, irregularly and under cover. On the other hand, 'in proportion as the court of honor will have acquired authority over the opinions of the people, in virtue of the wisdom and weight of its decisions, it would become little by little more severe until the point is reached where the legitimate occasions reduce themselves to almost nothing, the point of honor having changed in principle, and then duels might be entirely abolished'. In fact, he observed, duels have noticeably diminished in France but 'that is not because they are condemned or punished; but because the morals have changed', without the government having anything to do with it. But a court of honor would have a part to play in such a modification of sentiment, and its jurisdiction might be extended beyond the adjudicating of the affairs of the military and the nobles so as to include the matters that count in the judgment of the common people as well. And the opinion of the women of the community must be included in the purview of the court. Thus constituted it would have authority over all the great and the princes, even the King himself who might consider a prize of honor awarded him for his moderation to be a finer badge than that of royalty. For Kings themselves are 'more subject than any one to the judgment of the public, and they can, consequently, appear before the tribunal which represents it, without demeaning themselves'. But in a flash Rousseau turned critic of his ideal fancy here, just as he had of the projects of St. Pierre whose fault it shared, that 'such an institution is entirely contrary to the spirit of monarchy' and cannot possibly succeed. It is not possible to mix a republican institution with the monarchical. Still, since the existing system of control is a failure this did seem the only possible way to proceed.¹

Rousseau turned to the case at hand. A theatre in Geneva must certainly make some change in the maxims, or if one pleases, the prejudices or opinions of the people, which will react upon the morals. Subsequently to that influence no laws will be

¹ This digression on duelling—pp. 221-7.

of any avail against such opinion. When one has authorised an institution which produces a different sentiment one has little control over the effects thereof by the powers of law and government. A censorship would be of little use, and besides, Geneva had it already, and 'the first mark of its powerlessness to prevent the abuse of comedy will be that of letting it establish itself at all'. However, D'Alembert's expedient had not been that of a censorship but actual laws making comedians honest folk. Here was an open recognition of the fact that 'the status of the comedian is one of licence and bad morals'. They are generally held in disesteem on that account. Such a universal prejudice must have a universal cause. It might, of course, be imputed to the preachings of the clergy, were it not the fact that the Roman opinion was the same, antecedent even to the advent of Christianity. Only the Greeks seem to have had a more favorable view, but even for this very special reasons existed. The great drama of Greece was tragedy, which set the whole tone of their stage. Sacred in its origin its pieces were drawn from the 'national antiquities' of which the Greeks themselves were devoutly fond. They regarded their tragic actors as 'educated citizens representing before the eyes of their compatriots the history of their own country'. These Greeks, enthusiasts for liberty, loved to see rehearsed before them the crime and the punishment of their ancient masters. Only men played in their drama, and so no scandals were associated with the stage. Their theatres thus gave 'grand and superb spectacles under the heavens and in the presence of the whole nation', kindling the sentiments of honor and glory. So the Greeks could well hold their actors in esteem. After so ideal a picture Rousseau, as a follower of Montesquieu, ought, perhaps, to have allowed the possibility of a national theatre at Geneva, drawing upon the ancient heroism of the past in like manner for the refreshment of the spirit of liberty, a theatre allowable if it did not import the alien tragedy and comedy of France. But he brushed aside any such intimation, and reverted to the memory of what Plato had taught, that Athens, for all that nobility of her tragedy, was not an example of good morals; Sparta was, and it was also without a theatre—which was an error of fact on the part of Rousseau. He was determined to argue this point on radical lines, however, and to repeat what Plato had said in condemnation of the art of the theatre.¹

'The talent of the comedian, what is it? The art of counterfeiting, of clothing oneself in another character than one's own, of appearing different from what one is, of becoming

¹ pp. 227-30.

impassioned in cold-blood, of saying something other than one thinks, as naturally as if one really thought so, and finally of forgetting one's own place in virtue of taking that of another. . . . I adjure every sincere man to say whether he does not feel at the bottom of his heart that there is in this traffic of oneself something servile and mean. . . . Fundamentally, then, what kind of spirit is it the comedian receives from his position? A mixture of lowness, falsity, ridiculous pride, and unworthy demeaning of himself which makes him fit to be every sort of personage excepting the noblest of all, that of man, which he abandons.' And in a fury of depreciation Rousseau suggested that one who plays the part of a thief on the stage will do so in life, an outrageous judgment for which he afterwards made apology. Still it had this much truth, that the lives of players always show a certain demoralisation. While orators, preachers and others seem often to pay likewise with their persons, they really speak for themselves and not in any fictitious part, and they do not annul their own personality. It is bad enough to see crooks in actual life playing the part of honest men without going to a theatre to see an honest man in a comedy impressing the maxims of rascality on the public.

The worst effects of the stage are the moral disorders it produces among the sexes. The morals of the one sex depend greatly upon those of the other. Not that they are always the same, but they always attain to the same degree of goodness. An example is taken from Murali's description of the English. The women are sweet and timid; the men hard and fierce. They thus reinforce each other's contrasting characters, because the spirit of the nation is to take everything to the extreme. The sexes like to live by themselves, although they also enjoy gathering together at the table and at games. 'They both love their country and its laws; both honor the conjugal vow.' Life in the country suits them perfectly, and from their love for solitude arises a love of 'contemplative reading and novels with which England is swamped'. They are thus rather self-contained, needing little frivolous amusement, and thinking less about appearing to be happy than in being so. This romantic picture he was elaborating only for the moral lesson that the character of the women of the nation determine that of the men, though they may be ever so different in characteristics. And further he wanted to impress the beauty of a 'retired and domestic life' for the women, 'their peaceful family and household cares', their intrinsic modesty, 'their chastity inseparable from their goodness.' Now life on the stage means the contrary of all this, the intermingling of the sexes continually and the abandoning

of such distinctive virtues in the women with a consequent demoralisation of the men.¹

But he envisaged the philosophers of Paris rising to take exception to that ideal of woman's virtue. He had heard them often mocking at chastity, as a virtue invented only for social reasons, to safeguard the rights of fathers and husbands and to maintain some measure of order in families. So why should men or women blush for the needs nature has given them, for acts so indifferent in themselves and so useful to the species? 'Why, the desire being equal on both sides, should the demonstrations thereof be different?' True, the sentiments of sex are natural, but so are these feelings of modesty with regard to sex—one is as much the natural fact as the other. And good enough reasons can be discerned in Nature's provision: 'The shame which hides from the eyes of others the pleasures of love is a thing of some importance: it is the common safeguard nature has given to the two sexes in a state of weakness and self-forgetfulness that exposes them to the mercy of the first-comer; so it is Nature covers their sleep with the shades of night; . . . so, too, she makes every animal in suffering seek a retreat and the desert places, so as to suffer and die in peace without being exposed to attacks it cannot repulse.' And the author of Julie's *Letters* added something to this account about the delights of virtue guarding itself: 'True love possesses in effect that which chastity by itself is unwilling to give: the mixture of weakness and modesty makes it more touching and tender; the less one obtains, the greater the value of what one does have; and thus it is that one enjoys at the same time his privations and his pleasures.' But why, the philosophers still clamor, is modesty the peculiar virtue of the woman and not of the man? 'As if all the austere duties of the woman could not be derived from this fact alone that an infant ought to have a father.' Another answer is simply that it is the voice of nature in the relations of the sexes: 'Man can be audacious, that is what he is meant to be; it is very necessary that some one shall declare himself; but every woman without shame is blameworthy and depraved, because she tramples under foot the sentiment natural to her sex'.² All the world is witness to this truth.

That these sentiments are inherently natural is actually proved by experience. If feminine modesty were merely a prejudice created by society and education, it would be found

¹ pp. 231-3.

² Cf. Pufendorff, *Law of Nature*, bk. 6, ch. 1, sects. 29-32; Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 16, ch. 12 ('De la pudeur naturelle'), 'elle [nature] a établi la défense, elle a établi l'attaque', p. 320.

best wherever the education is most elaborate and refined, but exactly the contrary is true. This virtue is found always where the training of youth is in its most primeval state as in the mountains of Switzerland. Of course, the philosophers might be facetious and, taking their evidence from something still nearer the state of nature, argue that the animals have no modesty. 'Man is not a dog nor a wolf. It is only necessary to establish in his species the very first relationships of society to impart to his sentiments a morality always unknown to the beasts. The animals have a heart and some passions, but the holy image of goodness and of beauty will never enter anything but the heart of man. But despite that, where have they learned that instinct never produces in the animals effects analogous to those that shame produces among men?' And he cited the delicacies of his pigeons in their mating: 'No, the fond Galatea never did better, and Virgil could well have taken the dove as one of his most charming images'. However, be feminine modesty natural or not in women, certain it is that the proper thing for them is to live in the home and not in the public eye. And even if their virtues were nothing but a social 'invention', these ought none the less to be cultivated. 'Is there any sight in the world so touching, so worthy of respect, as that of the mother of a family surrounded by her children, managing the work of her domestics, making for her husband a happy life, and wisely governing the household? It is there she shows herself in all her dignity as a good woman; there she truly imposes respect, and beauty divides with honor the homages rendered to virtue. A household whose mistress is absent is a body without a soul, which soon falls into corruption. . . . One feels she is not in her place in public.' That is a view common to all peoples. They honor a woman for her qualities of modesty most and they dislike seeing her put on the air of masculine assurance. In the ancient world the social customs followed these sentiments and 'domestic peace' and close unions existed. Since then changes in morals have come to pass. The barbarian invasion in Europe brought 'the license of camps'. Chivalresque customs resulted in women gadding all over the country with the men and produced gallantry, and so on to the publicities and politenesses of the contemporary world.¹

The theatre only accentuates this demoralisation in women. On the stage they abandon their natural modesty. They make a public show of themselves, and that for money. Is it conceivable that they will 'never let themselves be tempted to satisfy the desires they take such great pains to arouse'? And when it is

¹ This essay on the history of morals and modesty, pp. 232-8.

not always easy even for a woman who is good and wise to safeguard her heart, what is to be expected of young actresses living in an environment where all the talk and action is about love and pleasure. Inevitably they must lose their modesty and acquire a forwardness contrary to their natural character, and 'the audacity of a woman is the sure sign of her shame'. Even supposing it were true that some few can escape these influences, what good can be said of a profession that makes an honest woman in it such a *prodigy*? Usually it is this way, 'if they learn lessons of virtue on the scene, they are very quickly going to forget them in the foyers'. And it goes without saying that disorder in the actresses involves the actors too, who live in the greatest familiarity with them.¹

To prevent such inevitable effects drastic action alone suffices, and that is simply to remove their cause, the producing of plays. That is the only answer to D'Alembert's mere palliative for the evil.

Now Rousseau pitied the victims of the theatrical art. It does not follow, he added, that in condemning the institution we must despise those who are implicated in it. He pleaded for charity toward them, remembering his own involvements from youth onwards: 'too often a misstep of youth decides the lot of all life; and when one feels a true talent, who can resist the pull? The great actors carry with themselves their own excuse; it is the bad ones only who are to be despised.'

It was time to apply these thoughts more specifically to the case of Geneva. Here was a people well-off because of their assiduity in work. They had no time to waste at the theatre; or if they did so, they would subsequently lack money for such purposes. It would be hard to support a comedy the whole year round in that town when many a large and wealthy city is barely able to do so. To cut costs by reforming the tradition of expensive apparel and other luxuries of the scene would be vain: 'no good actor will ever consent to make himself a quaker'. Besides it must be considered that the people of Geneva love the country and spend their time there in the fine seasons, while those left behind are not the sort who can afford to go. Of course, to accommodate those with means who are on vacation the city might abandon the practice of closing its gates and permit any one to come and go the whole night long—a dangerous proposal in view of the three alien powers right at the door of the city, and not likely to appeal to the Genevans who still patriotically celebrated the 'escalade' in memory of their defeating the invaders from Savoy at one of their gates. Furthermore, it must

¹ pp. 238-40.

be reckoned that a great many citizens would surely look askance at any departure from the ancient maxims, and would hold aloof from the theatre for patriotic, if not for religious reasons, and they would have a following which would further prevent its success. As a result the comedy would never maintain itself solely from its own receipts and would need a subsidy through the imposition of taxes. It was very unlikely that the fathers of the city would ever authorise such a draft on their own pockets for a theatre. It could never get established on such terms.¹

But suppose it were established, consider the consequences. It must certainly produce, as Plato discerned, an entire revolution in the habits and morals of the people. One of the characteristic institutions of Genevan society was its 'circles', groups of people of the same sex who spent afternoons together, playing games, talking, reading, drinking, smoking. They usually hired some quarters for their circle. Very occasionally only did they take suppers there, for they mostly liked to be with their families in the evening. Sometimes the men went walking out together, or else engaged in sports. The circles of women met to take tea and gossip. Such were the daily amusements of the city, simple and innocent as befitted 'republican morals'. A theatre planted in the midst of such a small society would be so dominating an amusement as to absorb all these others and abolish entirely the circles. Now these circles had a moral value because they provided for the separation of men and women according to their distinctive interests. If the sexes spend all their time together, the men will inevitably adopt the women's manner of life, because the latter cannot stand that of the men. So it is in the great cities. Thus 'every woman of Paris assembles in her boudoir a seraglio of men who are more woman than she herself, who know how to render all sorts of homage to beauty, except that of the heart of which she is worthy. Nature does not prescribe a house-keeping, sedentary life to man, as their restlessness under it amply shows.' Among barbarians, to be sure, men and women lived pretty much the same way; but the sexes were less highly differentiated; and in any case the men lived their own way and the women 'had the courage to live like them', with the result that they were both 'robust' and the men were not 'enervated'.

But if it is harmful to contradict nature physically, it is still more so in matters of the spirit. 'Imagine the stuff of the soul of a man wholly occupied with the important business of amusing women'—a chagrined confession from the author of *Julie's Letters*, now recovering his self-respect and pride, and becoming so defiant that he asserted no woman ever had 'the heavenly

¹ pp. 240-4.

fire of genius', which struck at many a contemporary, and especially at Mme d'Épinay with her attempts at writing. And he mocked those of her circle in which 'the general spirit of gallantry stifled at once genius and love'.

Contrast the circles of Geneva. There the men can speak freely of their country and virtue without suffering the polite mockery of wits that only want to make women laugh. The men must uphold their views by vigorous and accurate knowledge, not by a *bon mot*. Grant that their language is often licentious, that is far preferable to having both sexes decently flirting with vice. Of course, the women, too, in their circles will often gossip spitefully, but that is better than speaking ill of their husbands to other men. Besides, their censorship may often avert public scandals: 'Let them gossip, then, so long as they do it among themselves'. More serious faults appear in the circles of the men, notably, their drunkenness. 'All intemperance is vicious, and especially that which deprives us of the noblest of our faculties. The excessive use of wine degrades man, alienates his reason, at least for a time, and in the long run brutalises it. But in the end the love of wine is not a crime; it rarely makes a man commit crime; it makes him stupid not wicked. . . . Generally speaking drinkers have cordiality, frankness; they are almost all good, straight, just, faithful, fine and honest fellows even at their own cost. . . . I repeat, it would be much better to be sober and true, not only for oneself but even for the sake of society; for everything that is evil in morality is still more so in the political realm. But the preacher stops short at the personal evil, the magistrate sees only the public consequences; the one has for object only the perfection of man to which man does not attain; the other, only the good of the State so far as it can be attained: thus all that one rightfully blames in the flesh ought not to be punished by the laws. No people ever perished from excess of wine, all perish from the disorder of the women: the first of these two vices turns man away from the others, the second engenders them all.' Plato in his *Laws* had allowed only the old men to have recourse to forgetfulness in wine. Rousseau was inclined to think even that concession wrong, for it allows the good man to cease to be a citizen before his death. Howbeit, with regard to these different dangers of the circles, one must remember that it is impossible to have perfection, but 'the best possible only according to the nature of man and the constitution of the society'. And surely the way to that improvement in Geneva is not by establishing a theatre, and the resulting new customs contrary to the spirit of the people.¹

¹ pp. 244-53.

It must be admitted that the people of Geneva had already departed from many of their ancient usages. Morals were visibly on the decline. For instance, young men no longer received the education they once had but were now taught to be smart and to cut a figure with the women. The introduction of French drama would but aggravate the faults of such an education. Through its requirements in the way of money it must surely increase the social distinctions based on wealth and produce greater inequalities—all wrong in a republic. Its total effect would be an acceleration of the tendencies toward ruin. And as for comedy in particular, 'what! Plato banished Homer from his republic, and shall we suffer Molière in ours?' And the playing upon the passion of love, in default of a real love of country or humanity, is not that, too, dangerous: 'is it in working oneself up emotionally every day that one learns to rise above tenderness?'—and, in an aside—'One triumphs easily over a feeble inclination, but he who has known true love and known how to conquer it, ah! let us pardon that mortal, if he exists, for daring to pretend to virtue!'

No, if theatre there must be, let it represent, as Plato said, only good things fit for free men to contemplate. For the people of Geneva let it be men of their own stuff who write their drama, and in no case comedy, for that was the kind of thing which prepared the way for the death of Socrates in Athens. Perhaps Voltaire will compose some historical tragedies for them. Still, a warning was very necessary—'in a State as small as the republic of Geneva, all innovations are dangerous'. It would be far better for the people to dispense with any theatre and to draw entirely from their own resources and find their pleasures and duties in their station in life.¹

Is no sort of spectacle then to be tolerated in a free republic? Of course there is, for it is precisely in republics that the public spectacle has its origin.² The representation of things before the people as a whole has always been one of the bonds of their union and a support of liberty. Such things still exist in Geneva, public fêtes, reviews of the soldiery, competitions in archery, target practice, lake sports. And more can be made of these spectacles and of the awarding of prizes for excellence or proficiency. In the winter-time public balls or assemblies are legitimate amusements where the youth of both sexes have a place to meet and enjoy each other's society. For the dance had been too much frowned upon by the ecclesiastics (it was a

¹ pp. 253-62.

² Cf. *Essay on Languages* which Rousseau had in manuscript at the time of composing this *Letter*, above, vol. i, pp. 70-1.

favorite recreation, be it noted, with Mme d'Houdetot); it is a very natural mode of expression for mankind and a social advantage in that it enables boys and girls to become acquainted with each other before marriage. It might be much more of an institution, therefore, instead of a stolen delight, and would then supplant the sneaking tête-à-tête resorted to by young persons who are denied the opportunity to meet openly. Let these assemblies be held with the parents and married folk as on-lookers, enjoying the scene, judging the excellences, and being honored as elders by a salute to the parquet from the dancers. With such regular and authorised ways of enjoying each other's society the young people will think less about amusement and be more attentive to their daily tasks or duties. On the whole such public celebrations must produce the atmosphere of one great family, as Plato desired for his republic, and on this sentiment the peace and prosperity of the country depend.

Strangers would come from afar to see such ideal sights, better attractions, Rousseau insinuated, than those with which the French visitors then amused themselves. And the Genevans who have wandered out from their home (they have a penchant for roaming and are found all over the face of Europe seeking their livelihood), these will be drawn back into the fold, and they are much more necessary to their native land than the foreigners with their alien usages and institutions. The sons of Geneva must be reunited with the great family. But how is this to be done? By publishing it abroad that at last Geneva has a comedy? As if they would leave Paris or London for that! The only way to attract them is to send them word of the revival of the modest fêtes and games they knew in their own youth and recall to their minds and hearts the charms of that modern 'Sparta'. Of course, the modern men of Geneva are very far from being the Lacedemonians so glorified in the pages of Plato and Plutarch, but the Spartan way is a proper model for patriots and for men everywhere who love liberty first and foremost. And there is no real danger that the wise magistrates of the republic imbued with that love will be carried away from this ideal by the article of D'Alembert. It is not for them, anyhow, that this *Letter* needs to be written. It is only to console those who are misled into thinking that they are missing something worth while in not having a theatre. It is to teach the youth to be content at home, to find their amusements in their duties, and to pass on undiminished their precious heritage of 'virtue, liberty, peace'. The citizen who was once a runaway apprentice ended his *Letter* with this counsel that sprang from his profound regret over the discontents of his own youth and the

untoward and far-reaching consequences of his ever having gone out from Geneva to Paris.¹

That was an honest estimate of the fatal step in his youth, for Rousseau was now passing his own life in strict review, believing himself to be near his end. That first adventure from home which had led him into the world of letters, and egoistic striving for fame and jealousies, and refusals to accept his responsibilities as a father—continually troubling him in retrospect—that was not the only epoch being passed before judgment, but a more recent one, too, the mis-step taken in his chosen solitude at the Hermitage, the writing of a romance and being so impassioned over his own images that he had no will to keep him from fixing his affections upon 'Sophie' on whom his eyes ought not to have looked. It was not good, he had learned by experience, to romanticise in art. That was a lesson he felt bound to teach. And in teaching it he would be forced, as he said in the *Moral Letters* destined for Mme d'Houdetot, to live up to the moral. So it was to satisfy his own pride and self-respect, as well as to instruct, that he wrote this long *Letter*. And these personal motives imparted to it a fervor of conviction. They gave him a power of genius oblivious of all consideration of comfort or health to sustain the composition of what was in fact a treatise of many essays. It was to all appearances the last effort of life, and a moral effort. Into it went his scorn of all his past compromises and worldly interests, and this fighting spirit added more fuel to the flame of genius. He hated the things that had alienated him from himself. He disliked himself in the role of a ladies' amuser, as part of the 'scraglio' of Mme d'Épinay, and even as the writer of Julie's *Letters*. It is not without great significance that he expressed a real reluctance to the idea of publishing the *Julie* at all.² He would now much rather be known to the public as the author of the *Letter on Spectacles*.

This *Letter* was in truth a fitting and natural sequel to his *Discourses on the Arts and Sciences* and *Inequality*. Some of it was but repetition of their themes: the praise of independence and solitude; the preference for the country over the town; the ascribing of true genius and character to the provinces rather than the city, the eschewing of luxury and distinctions of wealth and social position. But the ideal in terms of which those critical judgments had been made here received an ampler exposition than in the earlier discourses. It was not some imaginary 'state of nature' but the actual republic of Geneva. Nor was it the republic in the merely political 'form' delineated in his essay on the social contract, but a full and complete

¹ pp. 263-71 (end).

² Letter to Mme d'Houdetot, Feb. 13, No. 471.

society peopled by men and women and children as well as by citizens. And the proper relations of these distinct elements in the society to each other were sketched, especially those of one sex with the other, wisdom acquired partly from his own unhappy intimacies, partly from Plutarch. Some hints were given of the régime that ought to obtain in the home, as regards the mother and father and the upbringing of their children—although these thoughts still awaited a fuller excogitation. The essentials of a righteous life were told, the necessity of an occupation for every one and of finding one's pleasures in the attention to such duties. Recreation and amusement had their place, too, and deserved consideration, as both Plutarch and Plato had taught. And in regard to this matter it was important to realise what wealth of natural recreation a people actually possesses who cultivate their own national antiquities, spectacles, fêtes, games, and other expressions of the social interest. A theatre with its unhealthy influences is of no use in such a city, and it brings more possibilities of evil. The picture there given of the people of Geneva in their daily life and usages, a picture partly real and partly imaginary, was an offset to his harsh strictures upon the Parisian circles and their interests. That criticism was more effective because of this positive appreciation of the form of society and maxims of his native city. Thus Rousseau proved himself not a misanthropist nor a libeller of the human race but a lover of his own country and of its right way of life to which he wanted to return for ever.

This ampler sketch of the social order drew into itself some of the treasured ideas he must have had at hand in the form of notes for his many unfinished projects, particularly for the *Political Institutions*. There was, for instance, Plato's sound realistic principle that the social environment actually participates in the formation of moral character and excellence, illustrated in the effect of drama on the beholder and the actors alike. With that went dramatic criticism of the French theatre. Then there was material that seemed taken out of a history of morals, concerning the rise and decline of chivalry, the control of duelling, the appearance of the club in London and the circles in Geneva. Other points were on the nature and limits of law and government and the force of public opinion. The nature of morality was defined, however, as being not simply the opinion of the right but the effectual obligation—making the will the important thing, not the knowledge. And this moral will has its foundation in the natural sentiments which are not created by any external agencies but internal to man. The priority of the sentiments to the intellect and will was one of the ideas

growing strongly upon Rousseau and destined to have a further application in the coming theory of education. Thus he recognised here the sentiment of modesty in woman as her distinguishing quality and the basis of her proper virtue. The sexes are different as sexes and must be expected to exhibit that difference in their modes of life and qualities of character—here he disagreed with Plato, and followed Plutarch and some early moderns prior to the eighteenth century. He valued the individuality of women and men; and he carried the principle farther, in obedience here to Montesquieu, into the order of societies themselves, which have distinctive national characters and must be treated as such, so that the French theatre, and the practices connected therewith, are proved out of place in the milieu of Geneva. With all these various ideas this *Letter to D'Alembert* was the catch-all of Rousseau's thought at this moment of crisis—it was, in very truth, his own 'encyclopedia'.

One day, before this work was quite finished, Rousseau, feeling that death would overtake him first, sent Diderot a last message. He felt it deeply that in this time of his distress his oldest friend had not been to see him, nay even failed to send him any word of sympathy or encouragement. Yet he himself, but a few weeks before, upon hearing the rumors of the attacks on the *Encyclopedia* had written Diderot a letter of solicitude and, with 'imagination full of the dungeon of Vincennes', where he had trudged to see him in the hot summer days nine years past, he implored him now to quit the enterprise, if D'Alembert were willing, in order to save himself from another such imprisonment. To that letter of genuine concern no reply had come.¹ And he was most unhappy. Deleyre had been very faithful to him and was deeply shocked at the sight of his master in so desperate a condition of health, for he had come upon him reading the Bible and preparing for his end. He wrote back from Paris afterwards to divert him from that preoccupation and to reassure him by saying that Diderot, upon hearing of his state, had been profoundly touched and showed his affection and was concerned in particular over his financial resources during this incapacitation. But Deleyre had unwisely added something that spoiled the effect of his consolation—'but I don't know what there is between you two. Pardon each other mutually what there is too stiff-necked, or else too weak, in your characters.'² So Diderot still thought badly of him! He

¹ To Mme d'Houdetot, Feb. 13, 1758, No. 471; cf. A. Feugère, *La Préface de la Lettre à D'Alembert*, in *Annales*, vol. xx, 1931, p. 131.

² From Deleyre, Feb. 28, No. 478.

could not bear to go knowing that was his last judgment. 'I am a bad man, isn't that it? You have the surest evidence of this, have you? Is that well attested for you? When you first began to learn that fact, it was sixteen years since I had been in your own eyes a good man, and forty years in the eyes of all the world: can you say as much of those who have communicated to you that fine discovery? If one can falsely wear the mask of a good man for so long, what proof have you that the same might not cover *their* visage as well as mine? Is it a means that is likely to give weight to their authority to charge in secret an absent man who is out of condition to defend himself? But that is not the question here. I am a wicked fellow; but why am I? Take care, my dear Diderot, this merits your attention: one is not evil-doing for nothing; if there were a monster so made, he would never wait forty years to satisfy his depraved inclinations. Consider, then, my life, my passions, my tastes, my inclinations; inquire, if I am wicked, what interest might possibly bring me to being so. I who, to my misfortune, always have a heart too sensible, what would I gain by breaking with those who were dear to me? To what place have I aspired? What pensions, what honors have you seen me pretend to? What competitors have I to get rid of? What could bring me to do evil? I who seek only solitude and peace, whose sovereign good consists in laziness and do-nothing, whose indolence and physical ills scarcely let me have time to provide for my subsistence, to what point, for what good would I proceed to plunge myself into the agitations of crime, and trouble myself in the schemes of rascality. Whatever you might say on that subject, one does not flee mankind when one is seeking to harm them; the bad man can meditate his violence in solitude, but it is to the solitude he brings it. A scoundrel has address and sang-froid; a treacherous man is self-possessed and doesn't fly into a rage: do you recognize in me anything of all that? I am carried away in my anger, and often thoughtless when I am perfectly cool. Do these faults make a bad man? No, without doubt; but the bad man avails himself of them to ruin the person who has them. I wish that you might also reflect a little about yourself. You pride yourself on your natural goodness; but do you realise to what extent example and error can corrupt it? Have you never feared being surrounded by clever adulators who take the trouble to praise you grossly to your face only to take advantage of you all the more adroitly under the lure of a feigned sincerity? What a fate for the best of men to be misled by his very candour, and to be innocently, in the hand of the wicked, the instrument of their perfidy. I know that one's pride revolts at such an idea,

but it merits the examination of reason. Here are the considerations which I beg you to weigh well: think a long time before you reply to me. If they do not touch you, we have nothing more to say to each other; but if they make any impression on you, then we can proceed to clear things up; you will find in me again a friend worthy of yourself, and who perhaps will not be without use to you. I have a motive of great weight for urging upon you this examination, and it is as follows. You can have been seduced and deceived. But your friend is suffering in his solitude, forgotten by all that was dear to him. It is possible that he will fall into utter despair, and die there, judging ill that ungrateful man whose adversity once made him shed so many tears but who now meanly overwhelms him in his own affliction. It can come to pass that in the end the proofs of his own innocence might come to you, that you will be forced to honor his memory, and that the image of your friend dying will never leave you peaceful nights. Diderot, think about this. I shall not say more to you.¹

Mme d'Houdetot heard the news of his dangerous illness and sent him word of her deep sympathy, and that of St. Lambert who was now back with his friends in Paris. She offered, also, to take charge of any papers he feared to leave behind him, lest helpless Thérèse Le Vasseur be harassed by the officers of the law after he was gone, for he wanted to provide for her security and well-being, and actually made a legal settlement upon her of all that he had in the way of property, his household goods, in recognition of her loyalty and services.²

Other true friends showed up. Far away in Geneva, citizen J. F. De Luc wrote: 'I fear that your illness might not permit you to make provision for all your needs', and he had a banker in Paris notify him of a credit placed to his account, which he gratefully declined to use. Deleyre, too, wanted to be helpful, and he told the news of Paris in his lively vein and sent a translation of Seneca he had been wanting. But Deleyre was too disingenuous to be a wise correspondent. He had evidently been badly shaken by something he had heard and could not believe, but yet could not keep out of his letter—'I have heard that they accuse you of wicked things, and I have not believed you, of all the world, in the least capable of them. . . . I have not even informed myself about what they impute to you, so much do I count upon you.'³ Such a message was not calculated to tranquillise him.

¹ To Diderot, Mar. 2, 1758, No. 479.

² From Mme d'Houdetot, Mar. 3, No. 480. For the settlement, of Mar. 8, 1758, pp. 375-7.

³ From J. F. De Luc, Mar. 15, No. 482; from Deleyre, Mar. 17, No. 485.

But Spring was coming on, and the *Letter to D'Alembert* was at last done. 'I continue to be sufficiently well to walk, although feebly; I make use of every fine day to repair to the forest of Montmorency where the verdure is already pointing up and the birds are beginning to be heard. There, I renew acquaintance with an ancient friend that the others have made me neglect and is surely worth more than all of them. During the short period that remains to me, I shall enjoy the happiness of *living*; my regret is not of finishing so soon, but of having begun so late.'¹

The thoughts in these woodland walks were about the soul and its relations to its Creator. He was meditating more actively upon a religious profession of faith. But Mme d'Houdetot, anxious about him, had reminded him that she wanted her copy of *Julie*, and especially because she could now read it to St. Lambert. He had not felt inclined to go on with the copying, for it meant retracing the story of his passion, and reviving memories alien to his religious mood; nor had he thought she was still interested in him and in the romance. But he was willing for her sake to continue with the copy. And she wrote again to assure him of her interest: 'count always on the sentiments of a friendship which is not amazed at any injuries, which pardons injustice, which deplores faults and weaknesses, to the progress of which you yourself have been the greatest obstacle, but which, such as it is, will always subsist for you as you are, with crime and indignity excepted, of which I will never believe you capable. Believe that I have always seen you much better than you sometimes showed yourself to be.'² Thus a second time Mme d'Houdetot interrupted him in the preoccupations of his solitude, and this time it irritated him, as an invasion of his late-gained peace.

Those remarks suggested that Mme d'Houdetot was now seeing him more through the eyes of others. She was disavowing, in those exceptions of crime and indignity, what she must partially believe. She was now under the influence of others, of St. Lambert. He did not want to see her in that light, and wrote a letter declining any further correspondence.³

Deleyre continued still attentive but his asseverations no longer seemed innocent to one who was finding the opinion of the world set against him. 'Take heart once more', Deleyre wrote cheerily, 'I believe it is essentially good. Live with the does, and don't let any one kill the rabbits. Be content with

¹ To Mme d'Houdetot, Mar. 23, No. 487.

² From Mme d'Houdetot, Mar. 23, No. 486; to same Mar. 23, No. 487, from same, no. 488.

³ To the same, Mar. 25, No. 489.

yourself, and you will not regret the hours passed in nothing else but making us all better. Good day, my dear Silvain; if you meet with any Nymph, flee; they are the pest of the woods, or else do as our first ancestors did, and don't speak to her; always yours.'¹ What was the point of such a jest?

There was indeed much talk abroad in Paris. Diderot had compared notes with St. Lambert about Rousseau's intimacy with Mme d'Houdetot. He suspected that Rousseau had not made the kind of confession he expected him to make to the lover. He became convinced of it from St. Lambert's ignorance. He was indignant both at the dishonesty of a half-truth in such matters and at the deception he considered to have been practised upon himself. He utterly lacked the imagination to see that Rousseau's action had been governed by his absolute loyalty to Mme d'Houdetot who had made him promise to let her extricate herself from the affair her own way. The only wrong step Rousseau took in the matter was to have said anything at all to Diderot, to have unburdened himself of his trouble over it, for this was taking it out of Mme d'Houdetot's hands. And so it came about that Diderot, wise in his own moral conceits, felt justified in violating the secrecy to which he had been pledged and in telling St. Lambert all that Rousseau had told him; and then it was soon the gossip of Paris.²

One day in the month of May, a letter came to Rousseau from Eaubonne, once the scene of his happiness. 'It has been a long time since you have heard tell of me: it is only fair to you to give you the reasons, and those for the conduct which I ought to take with reference to you in the future. I have ground for complaint over your indiscretion and that of your friends. I would have guarded all my life the secret of your unfortunate passion for me, and I was concealing it from him whom I love so as not to make him estranged from you: you have spoken about it to people who have made it public, and who have made the appearances against me such that they might damage my reputation. These rumors for some time past have reached my lover, who has been deeply afflicted that I should have made a mystery of a passion that I never encouraged and that I kept from him only in the hope that you might become reasonable and that you could be our mutual friend. I saw in him a change of feeling that I thought would cost me my life. The justice he renders me, finally, with regard to the goodness of my heart, and his return to me has brought me repose again. But I do not wish to risk troubling him further, and I owe it to myself to

¹ From Deleyre, Apr. 9, No. 492.

² Mme d'Épinay, *Mémoires*, vol. ii, pp. 319-20, footnote of editor.

break off all relations with you. . . . You can rest tranquil yourself as to how my lover and I think of you. In the first moments of his learning of your passion and what it had made you do, he ceased, for an instant, to see the virtue he looked for in you and believed to be there. Since then he is more sorry for your weakness, for which he reproaches you; and both of us are very far from joining with the people who want to blacken you; we shall dare, and we shall always dare, to speak of you with esteem. For the rest, you are to feel that you do not need to make any confidences or explanations to me on that score, and that we must let your passion and the trouble it has caused me be perfectly forgotten. All you owe me now is to remain quiet, sure that my repose is established, that my innocence, which you might want to defend, is recognised; that we do not think any evil of you at all and that we shall not let any be said of you. I shall send to learn news of you with interest; and be persuaded that despite the part which my reputation, the regard for my own happiness and my repose obliges me to take, I shall never cease to interest myself in you. If you will continue the copies of Julie for me, I shall be much obliged; if not, I shall return to you what I have already, but it is only fair to pay you for what you have done. Adieu.¹

A few days later Rousseau sent off to his publisher, Rey, the manuscript of his *Letter to D'Alembert* which he had kept by him over a month after its completion, awaiting word as to the way to despatch it to the press at Amsterdam.² He seems to have brooded further over a vindication of himself in this work. But he had contented himself with saying in his *Preface*: 'It is (my duty) that makes me keep silent with so many things I can say for myself'.³ Yet the thought of what Diderot and others were saying about him, and the violation of the pledge of secrecy preyed upon his mind. It seems, indeed, that St. Lambert actually visited him in the hope of quieting his obvious excitement and exonerating Diderot of the charge of 'pretended indiscretions'. That visit, however, was too late, for another version of the ending of the *Preface* had been sent off to Rey but a day or two before, and in a passage where the author apologised for the length, the style, and the lack of genius in his work, he made this announcement to the public:⁴ 'Once I had

¹ From Mme d'Houdetot, May 6, 1758, No. 494.

² To Rey, May 14, 1758, No. 498.

³ Manuscript of *First Preface* to the *Letter to D'Alembert*, cited, C.G., vol. iv, p. 28, bottom.

⁴ From St. Lambert, Oct. 9-10, 1758 (op. cit., Nos. 551-2), the letter speaks of conversations 'the past summer', and Mme d'Épinay's *Mémoires* contain a letter from Grimm alluding to a visit on the part of St. Lambert, although it is wrongly

an Aristarchus, severe and judicious; I no longer have him, I want no more of him, but I shall regret him without end, and he is very much needed more for my heart's sake than for my writings'. And then another afterthought, in a footnote, a quotation from *Ecclesiasticus*: 'If you have drawn a sword against your friend, don't despair, for there is a way to return to him. If you have made him unhappy by your words, fear not, for it is possible to become reconciled with him. But for outrage, hurtful reproach, the revelation of a secret, and the wound done to his heart by betrayal, there is no grace in his eyes; he will go away from you without ever returning.'¹

When that declaration came out six months later, Diderot could never be a friend thereafter. Already beset on every hand by enemies seeking to wreck his *Encyclopédie* he saw this as a malignant aid to the enemy.² It was also an unbearably dramatic revenge for his dictum on the wickedness of solitary men to cast aspersions on his comedies, as worth so many sermons. This was more than the 'philanthrope', as a man of letters, could stand. Egoism supplied fuel to his proper indignation and made it less righteous. Diderot became a fast friend of Grimm and Mme d'Épinay, and in the end drifted into the circle hostile to him.

placed as subsequent to the publication of the *Letter*. St. Lambert wrote a note to Rousseau on June 23, 1758 as if he had just returned to Paris after a *conversation* about the *Letter* (ibid. No. 512); but Rousseau had already despatched to Rey the change for the *Preface*, probably on June 21 (ibid., No. 509, p. 4). He was evidently not convinced by St. Lambert nor moved to retract the Latin note alluding to Diderot; yet he learned to regret his action just on the eve of publishing. See letter to Rey, Sept. 13, 1758: 'I feel but too well that on the whole I am led only to make things worse.' (No. 539.) Cf. A. Feugère, op. cit., *Annales*, vol. xx, pp. 134 f., 157, 161.

¹ *Preface, Letter to D'Alembert*, H., vol. i, pp. 180-1 and footnote.

² St. Lambert's first impulse of indignation over that public charge made against Diderot reveals how much was at stake for the editor of the *Encyclopédie*—Oct. 10, No. 552. Cf. Reputed Letter of Diderot to M. N.—Mme. d'Épinay's *Mémoires*, Pt. 2, ch. 9, pp. 409-11.

CHAPTER XIV

LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE

MEANWHILE a season of fine weather had come. For the third year Rousseau was enjoying a spring-time in the country. It brought him some abatement of his physical suffering and opened up walks in the forest of Montmorency where he wandered solitary and in reflection.¹ Friends had fallen away from him, but he was not forsaken. He had been renewing 'an old acquaintance' in those haunts of Nature, 'one worth more than all human ties', the God of perfect goodness and clemency.² 'On all important occasions', he wrote, 'men resume their original characters.'³ As a youth he had spoken his orisons out of doors, in the garden of Charmettes, and composed his own prayers to the Eternal Being. Now that he was a man of whitened hair,⁴ aged by the fever of his experience, he returned again to worship in Nature and to profess his faith in the Divine. Such religious converse was the accompaniment of his lonely promenades in the woods of Montmorency.

His heart was not made, however, to eschew all human attachment and expression. Some time past he had been drawn to that intelligent young minister of Geneva, Jacob Vernes, and had told him in letters some of those thoughts on religion. Much to his disappointment Vernes had been inclined to disparage these personal intimations of religion, as not conformable to the 'revelation' of God in the Scripture, and started an argument about the matter. Whereupon Rousseau answered, about the time of concluding his *Letter to D'Alembert*: 'We are agreed on so much of the matter that it is not worth the trouble to dispute concerning the rest. I have told you many times: no man in the world respects the Gospel more than I. It is to my taste the most sublime of all books. . . . But in the end, it is just a book, a book unknown to three-quarters of the human race, and shall I believe that a Scythian and an African are less precious to our common Father than you and I, and why shall I think that he has deprived them, rather than us, of all the necessary resources for knowing it? No, my good friend, it is not on a few scattered pages one ought to go seek the law of God, but in the heart of man, where His hand has deigned to write: "O man, whatsoever man thou art, enter into thyself,

¹ To Vernes, C.G. iii, No. 490: to Rey, vol. iv, No. 524 and 538; to Lenieps, No. 535.

² To Mme d'Houdetot, C.G., vol. iii, No. 487, cited above.

³ *Julie*, pt. 5, Letter 3, H. vol. iv, p. 396.

⁴ *Seconde Préface, Julie*, p. 7.

learn to consult thy conscience and thy natural faculties, thou wilt then be just, good, virtuous, thou wilt incline thyself before thy master, and thou wilt participate in his heaven in an eternal blessedness." I do *not* scorn my reason on that point, nor the reason of others, but I feel by the peace in my soul, and by the pleasure I take in living and thinking under the eyes of the great Being, that I do not abuse myself in the judgments I form of him or in the hope I found upon his justice. Besides, my dear fellow-citizen, I have wanted rather to open my heart to you than to enter into a controversy with you; so let us leave things there, if you will, and all the more so because these subjects can scarcely be dealt with satisfactorily by letter.¹ Still Vernes persisted, very eager with his own orthodoxy—perhaps because it might be suspect on account of D'Alembert's attributing socinianism to the local clergy—and he showed himself determined to disabuse his older friend of his erring doctrines. Thus he contended, the Providence of God must not be so conceived as to leave out the idea that He will punish men for their sins; and if it be true that man's conscience rebels at the thought, then conscience must be denied authority here. This gave Rousseau sad and true forebodings. The two of them could never continue thus, with Vernes pressing such doctrines upon him; he would certainly resist such pressure and stand up for his own beliefs, that conscience is the only authority concerning righteousness, and that 'the equity of Providence' must correspond with the ideal of justice manifested in man's own conscience, an ideal which does not allow to be right the infliction of an 'eternal penalty' upon weak human beings. In his reply Rousseau frankly acknowledged his continued adherence to these opinions, adding, lest Vernes should take offence: 'You must remember especially that, in this dispute it is you who attack my sentiments, and that I am only on the defensive; while I moreover am very far from disapproving of yours, so long as you do not want to constrain any one to embrace them.'² Despite that temper of orthodoxy Rousseau still liked Vernes and was so anxious to cement their friendship, in the face of these apparent disagreements, that he invited him to come at once for a promised visit to him at Montmorency, in order that by being in each other's company for some days at a time they might reach a mutual understanding. Vernes, however, was unable to make the journey. And Rousseau, now thoroughly convinced that such things could not be discussed satisfactorily in letters, said no more.

¹ To Vernes, Mar. 25, C.G., vol. iii, No. 490.

² To Vernes, May 25, No. 500.

But his spirit was now in a livelier ferment than ever with regard to religion. Two years past he had been prompted to speak his mind to Voltaire about the meaning of a Providence and the necessity of a tolerance in all parties, the doubting philosophers as well as the orthodox. The wise Voltaire had not allowed himself to be drawn into public argument on these topics, a lesson Rousseau heeded, for he knew he had been incautious in that exposure of his views to one who was not friendly. More recently he had expressed what was in his mind in the form of soliloquies, those *Moral Letters* designed for Mme d'Houdetot, where he made a criticism of contemporary metaphysics in order to justify the moral and religious insights which cannot come in the guise of scientific knowledge. Those *Letters*, however, were not sent to their destination, and so nothing further came of them at the time. The need for expression had grown so great then, that he had to unburden himself to the little-tried Vernes. And Vernes was the first person to retort to him on this subject of religion, and to provoke him to a more active thought about it. Indeed Vernes was very disturbing. For just at this moment when hope had revived in him with the Springtide, and embellished days that were spent in communion with Nature, he was reminded by this friend that actual religion is mostly an affair of men, a public thing, mixed up with creeds, churches, political powers, authorities. And this religion of the world, apparently, had no room in it for the personal testimony to God in one's consciousness. The solitary free man's worship was as much unhonored by urbane ministers of the Gospel as by the philosophers. Yet this was the true and natural worship of God, which he felt ought to be vindicated. Still he did not care to dispute with Vernes, for he wanted him as a friend, not an adversary. He now had no one to talk with, and so his thoughts went on in a repressed, imaginary discourse that craved some investiture in the living word.

There were certain other ideas, too, pressing for declaration, ideas that needed not to be inhibited because they involved no trouble or danger. 'All the acts of understanding that raise our thoughts up to God, lead us above ourselves.'¹ His pre-occupation with religious realities produced sober reflection upon himself. The moralist had many more things to say by way of a judgment of his own experience. Recognising the truth that all his own errors had begun in his youth, and being desirous of instructing mankind, he was full of thoughts on education and the importance of family life in the home, and various other agencies and institutions that enter into the

¹ *Julie*, pt. 6, Letter 7, H. vol. v, p. 34.

making of man's character and happiness. These were more grateful thoughts that were bursting to be told.

Fancy supplied the lack of companions and real discourse. Rousseau imagined the give-and-take of his own ideas in the intercourse of the personages he had already created in imagination, St. Preux, Julie, Milord Edward, Wolmar. These characters of the half-abandoned novel came to life again in new roles. Their letters to each other became moral essays and 'plans for education' and even a profession of religious faith. In the sheer need of having to write out all that was on his mind Rousseau set to work upon a continuation of *Julie*, in Parts Five and Six.

Thus the opening letter of the Fifth Part is continuous with the last thought of the *Letter to D'Alembert* which had just been concluded. It is an autobiographical letter, a reflection upon the youthful waywardness of his departure from his true estate in Geneva to take up with the life in Paris. The desire to realise his talents had led him to that—he was now convinced that the cultivation of the talents is not the important thing for men. He had come to appreciate the necessity of a law of life and the validity of the 'public reason' and 'will' embodied in morals. He had learned something, too, of the power of the soul that triumphs over passion and enables one to reign over himself. Surely it is a finer thing to imitate virtue than merely to admire it; to live an example to others, like the honored Abauzit, the Socrates of Geneva, than to be merely a 'discourser' on virtue. The moral power to repress all penchants is the individual's distinctive possession—all that one can ever get from association with others is some help in the discerning of the right course to follow.

Such aids to a moral understanding of oneself are not to be found in the vast associations in which men lose themselves in cities, but in the modest circle of the family. Thus, as regards the virtue and happiness of man the domestic economy is much more important than the political, and, indeed, the latter is entirely dependent upon the former. For, besides moral guidance, the most essential goods to men come through the family, if its members are not wholly given over to the care of their property and the amassing of wealth; they enjoy ease, liberty, and gaiety. And in point of fact they may be said to do right simply in living thus and not doing any evil; and to be happy in that they do not suffer misery, since nothing really makes man miserable except being tyrannised over by others or seduced by his own vices. The true prosperity of the State consists, then, in such happy people living simply and next to the soil. 'When

it is a question of estimating the public power, the *bel esprit* visits the palace of the prince, his ports, his troops, his arsenals, his cities; the true statesman roams about the countryside and goes into the cottage of the laborer.¹

The fitting policy, then, for all social administration is to apply the principle of the family, and render every one as happy as possible in his own place. But are men not to be permitted to rise above their original condition when they have the talents therefor; are they not to be used in society according to their capacities? Rousseau answered from experience: That is not the most important thing; but rather, their own morals and happiness. 'Man is a being too noble to be made to serve simply as an instrument for others, and they have no right at all to employ him for their own convenience without considering likewise what is right for himself; for men are not made for places, but the places are made for them; and to distribute things properly, one must in the division of labor seek not so much what each man is best fitted for as that which is best for each man, to make him good and happy as far as it is possible. It is never permitted to make a human soul worse for the advantage of others, nor to make a rascal for the service of respectable people.'²

'To follow one's talent one must know it. Is it a very easy thing to discern, in all cases, the talents of men? . . . Nothing is more equivocal than the signs of inclination that one gives from childhood; the imitative spirit has often more to do with that than the talent: these signs depend more often upon some chance rencontre and not on a decided penchant, and even the penchant itself does not always announce the disposition. True talent, true genius, has a certain simplicity that renders it less restless, less active, less ready to show itself than is an apparent and false talent which one mistakes for the true sort and which is nothing but a vain desire to shine in something without means for success therein. . . . We have talents only to rise, no one has any to descend. . . .'³ This last observation recalls the order of things in Plato's Republic where the guardians who have risen to the highest seats of wisdom also take turns descending to the offices of common life. Reminiscent of the Greek, too, is a subsequent suggestion, that it is hard to believe the diverse talents of men ought all alike to be developed.

In any case, following one's talent is not the primary concern

¹ *Julie*, pt. 5, Letter 2, H., vol. iv, p. 373.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 374-5; cf. Pufendorff, *The Law of Nature*, bk. 6 ('Of Matrimony'), ch. 3, sect. 7, saying that man is never 'owned' in the same sense as a thing.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

of human life, and it must be postponed to the duties of one's life in the home and among one's fellows. Happiness is something more within direct reach. And the ideal human condition is a life in the domestic circle: 'A small number of gentle and peaceable folk united by mutual needs and by a reciprocal good will, there cooperate by divers activities toward a common end: every one, finding in his place all he needs to be content in it, and not to want in the least to leave it, attaches himself to it as if he were to remain there all his life, and the only ambition he retains is that of performing his duties in it well. There is so much moderation in those who command and so much zeal in those who obey, that those who are equal might distribute amongst themselves the same offices of command or obedience without any one's making complaint about his share. So no one envies the lot of another; no one believes he can increase his fortune except by the augmenting of the common wealth; the masters themselves judging of their own happiness only by that of the people who are about them.' And the happiness of days so spent by Julie and her family is described in language repeating that used by Socrates when he told, in the *Republic*, of the best way of life before the advent of injustice into human affairs: 'Every evening Julie, content with her day, desires nothing different for the morrow; and every morning she beseeches Heaven for a day like the last: she does always the same things because they are good, and because she knows nothing better to do.'¹

A family means children, who have their parts to play in the right scheme of life as well as the grown-ups. They ought to be obedient. They should be accustomed to rendering honor to age and to valuing simplicity and true merit. All this requires an education which must be started at birth. And the right procedure throughout is to get children to obey without having to exercise force or command.

This principle of education is the very same, of course, with Rousseau's principle of politics: the obedience of the person subject to any régime is never to be obtained by force but only by the sentiments of obligation that arise from the adoption of common values. The plan of education which here appears in its first formation was thus a counterpart of the projects already sketched out in the chapters and essays for the *Political Institutions*. It was an application of the guiding idea of the 'social contract' to the domestic economy. But in this later use the ideal of the way every man ought to treat his fellow was given much plainer definition than in those political essays: the funda-

¹ Ibid., pp. 383, 387. Cf. *Republic*, 372.

mental law of human dealings is respect for the personality of every one. And in this aspect the essays on education in the third letter of this Fifth Part of *Julie*, completed the meaning first divulged in the *Discourse on Inequality*.

The special maxims of education exhibited in Julie's household were derived from that general principle. Respect the child as a person, is the first thought, but note well, as a person in the child's way not in ours. Rousseau may have been helped to this appreciation by the wise example of Montesquieu in his treatment of peoples: men remote in time and place from ourselves and different in many other respects will have ways of their own befitting their nature and physical surroundings. And Buffon the naturalist had taught, too, that Nature is diverse in respect to all her works, in the forms of the earth as well as those of human society. Once Rousseau himself tried his hand at imagining a 'primitive' state with modes of thought, feeling, and conduct proper to so different a condition from the civilisation of Europe; the youth of the human race must be very different from its maturity, despite the tendency of modern philosophers following Francis Bacon to value only the coming of age of Europe and scorn the past. As it is with mankind, so it must be with man the individual: he is a child before he is a man, and as a child he has modes of acting and feeling which require to be understood if he is not to be educated in utter contradiction of nature.

The thing of first importance to realise is that the impulsive sentiments are prior to reason, and the body to the mind. The primary concern of a parent ought to be the physique of the child, because a sound body, as Plato and Plutarch and the modern Locke had taught, is the condition of all other development and well-being. The body is naturally active, and fortifies itself by its own activity and so it ought not to be confined in its movements, nor constrained to quiet for the sake of the adult members of the household. Such repression of physical energy evokes too soon the tendencies to reflection upon the self—it is the true order of nature that repose and thinking shall only come after a course of action which supplies the mind with experience.¹

But the principle of respecting nature in childhood goes still farther. 'Besides the constitution common to the species, every one brings into the world with him a personal temperament which determines his genius and his character, and that is not to be changed or forced but rather formed and perfected. All the characters are good and sound in themselves. . . . There are

¹ Cf. particularly Plato, *Laws*, 643, 793-6; Plutarch, *Moralia*, *On Education*, sects. 4, 10; *Lives*, *Life of Lykurgus*, sect. 15.

no errors in nature; all the vices one imputes to the natural being are the effect of the bad forms it has received. There is no man so bad that his penchants better directed might not have produced great virtues. . . . All cooperates toward a common good in the universal system. Every man has his allotted place in the perfect order of things; it is only a matter of finding that place and never perverting that order.¹ This optimistic vision of the order of Nature implies that there is a real Providence, but Rousseau did not want to inject a discussion of the religious aspect of his philosophy at this point. A difficulty of another sort, however, thrust itself forward for attention, concerning this plan of developing both the 'genius' and the 'character' of every individual. For it has been asserted previously that there is little real good, either for the individual or for the society, in encouraging the cultivation of all the diverse talents of men without exception. This seemed a contradiction of the present opinion and suggested a plausible alternative hypothesis, more in line, perhaps, with what Plato had taught. 'Would it not be infinitely better to form a perfect model of a reasonable and good man and then make every child approximate to that model by force of education, in exciting one feature, holding back another, repressing the passions, perfecting the reason, correcting nature?'² Yet 'was not Plato your master the very one who maintained that all human wisdom, all philosophy, could only draw out of the human soul what Nature had put there? . . . Once again, let it be said, it is not a matter of changing the character and of bending the natural form, but on the contrary of pushing it as far as it will go, of cultivating it and preventing it from degenerating; it is thus that a man becomes all it is in him to be, and that the work of nature is completed in him by means of education. But, before cultivating the character, it is necessary to study it, wait quietly for it to show itself, furnish it with occasions for so doing, always abstaining from doing anything rather than taking action out of season.'³ The outcome of the discussion was this, that the cultivation of the talents ought to be *postponed* to that of *moral habit*. Once a good character is formed, the genius of a person can safely be allowed full play, even with benefit to the individual and to society. Thus Rousseau interpreted what Plato and Plutarch meant to him in their theories of education.⁴

¹ Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 903; and Barbeyrac's note, in Grotius, *Rights of War, &c.* Introduction VII, that a disposition in children contrary to humanity is the result of bad education and custom rather than a 'natural invincible inclination'.

² pp. 394-5.

³ p. 396.

⁴ Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia*, on *Education*, sect. 4; *Moral Virtue*, sect. 12; *Contentedness of Mind*, sect. 13.

After the care of the body, then, the first consideration of the parent is the forming of character in the child. What can the educator do in this regard? The policy is to be the same as before; let the discipline come from Nature rather than from man. For 'docility' is best learned under the 'yoke of necessity', that is, where one sees only the natural consequences of his own action without the interposition of the will of other persons. Children suffer far less from what happens to them in the natural order than from the constraints purposely imposed upon them by others, ostensibly for their own good. And besides there is a 'cruel prudence' in making that first part of life unhappy in order to make certain of happiness in the rest 'which perhaps will never come'. From these constraints come all the vices characteristic of slavery, such as lying, vanity, rage, envy.¹

These things can start right at birth. The helpless infant cries to make its needs known, and the parent naturally, and quite properly, responds. In this relationship it is important from the first that the child shall have the consciousness of his 'misery, weakness, and dependence on others', and in general, his place in the order of Providence, so that when he comes to man's estate he will be able to say 'nothing human is foreign to him'. At the start Julie had made a mistake which taught her the necessity of letting a child have this experience. 'I had first resolved to grant him all that he demanded, being persuaded that the first movements of nature are always good and salutary. But it wasn't long before I found out that in making for themselves a right to be obeyed, children tend to take leave of the state of nature almost at the moment of birth, and that they contract our vices from our example, and their own by our indiscretion. . . . To make a refusal less cruel to him I have been lenient at first, and to spare him long unhappiness, crying, and rebelliousness, I have made every refusal irrevocable. . . . In all that crosses him he feels the rule of necessity, the effect of his own weakness, never the work of any one's ill will.' And there are many circumstances when refusals must be made without explanation: 'As soon as one has submitted something to their judgment, they pretend to judge everything, they become sophists, subtle, dishonest, full of chicanes, always trying to reduce to silence those who have had the weakness to expose themselves to their little lights. . . . In a word, the only means of rendering them docile to reason is not to reason with them but to convince them thoroughly that reason is above their age.' What Rousseau was most anxious to prevent here was the 'imperious' or 'tyrant nature' of which Plato had so great a

¹ H., vol. iv, p. 398.

fear. It is essential that the soul shall know itself to be in a tutelage to something above it in Nature.¹

Hence it ought to be a rule in the home not to let children thrust themselves into the conversation of their elders. This is a restriction, and not a constraint, for it is in the interest of their own freedom and happiness. 'Is it thwarting their liberty to prevent them from laying hands on ours? And can they not be happy without having a whole company reduced to silence in order to admire their puerilities? Let us prevent the rise of their vanity, or at least, let us arrest its progress; there one is truly preparing their felicity, for the vanity of man is the source of his greatest sorrows, and there is no one so perfect and so fêted but that vanity does not cause him more grief than pleasure.' So the household must have its laws for the good and for the liberty of all—like a little democracy. 'The only laws we impose on them in our house', says Julie, 'are those of liberty itself, that is to say, of not interfering with the company any more than it interferes with them, of not shouting out loudly when others speak to them; and, since we do not oblige them to occupy themselves with ourselves, I don't want them on their part to assume that we should occupy ourselves with them. . . .'² In general, the policy is 'not to spoil the man of nature in appropriating him to society'.³

This is the new plan of education, very contrary to the received ideas. In regard to the spirit of man it puts moral or right habits above intellectual training. There is to be no teaching of the understanding until the mind has had the experience of judging aright and in accord with others. This is the order of Nature, and 'the march of Nature is always the best' guide. Consequently, in passing to the program of intellectual education itself, this plan eschews the appalling lot of memorising which is inflicted upon a child. What is wanted is the power of judgment, not memory. And good judgment will come not by working directly upon his mind but by providing an environment of good and true things to draw out in him the natural appreciations and interests. 'It is in the choice of these objects, it is in the care to present to him incessantly what he ought to be acquainted with, and keeping away from him the things he ought to be ignorant of, that the true art of cultivating the first of his faculties consists; it is by such means that we ought to try to form for him a magazine of knowledge which will serve for

¹ Ibid., pp. 400-1; cf. Plato, *Laws*, 729; 793-4.

² pp. 402, 405; cf. Plutarch, *Lykurgus*, sect. 18; *Moralia, Conjugal Precepts*, 43; *How One May Discern a Flatterer from a Friend*, sect. 25.

³ Letter 8, p. 429.

his education during his youth, and for his conduct at all times of life.' This conception is identical with that of Plato in the third book of his *Republic* and in various places in the *Laws*.¹

It is a corollary of this principle that religion is not to be instilled by the learning of the catechism. Such memorising only fills the head with words. The pious Julie wants to make her children true Christians, and consequently she refuses to put them through the customary religious training.²

This completes the sketch of education. It remains to be noted that the program cannot possibly be put into effect save under the most favorable conditions. There must be a 'bon naturel' in the children, the example of moral living, peace and unison in the home, good character in the father or tutor, and the greatest possible patience, intelligence, and good-will in the domestics of the household. And in case there is a girl to be reared the conditions are so special and different that a separate memoir would be required on the education of girls.³

Rousseau was being fatally led toward the subject of religion, just as the argument of Plato's *Laws* had gravitated toward the Providence of God and Immortality of the Soul, in the later Books, Ten and Twelve. Julie's remarks about the catechism betrayed his ideas about the approach of man to Deity in a way quite other than the stereotyped custom. The letters of Vernes were fresh in his own memory. He needed to discuss religion, and he wanted also to give an example of the Christian way of conducting such a discussion. His imagination supplied the scene. Julie the exemplary mother of the family became an example of charity and moderation in her belief and dealings with others. Her husband Wolmar appeared in the guise of a free-thinking philosopher who doubted the pious beliefs of his wife. They were heard discoursing with each other upon those high matters, without antagonism but with a mutual tolerance and respect which might well be recommended to men the world over. And so Rousseau began on religion, in Letter 5.

Wolmar was represented as a man who lived *only* in Catholic countries—in this way Rousseau exculpated himself from any identity with this personage—and who had judged the beliefs of men by what he saw them doing. He saw a meaningless cult in vogue which good people set no real store by; he saw the clergy itself secretly mocking its professed belief; and he declared that in all his life he had found but three priests who

¹ Letter 3, pp. 404-7; cf. Plato, *Republic*, 400-2, *Laws* 681; Malebranche, bk. 3, pt. 2, ch. 4, p. 292; 'Un magasin de toutes les idées.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 408.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 409-10; cf. Plutarch, *On Education*, sect. 6; *On Restraining Anger*, sect. 11.

really believed in God. That was a shocking statement, and in pretending to disavow it, in a foot-note, Rousseau drew attention to its reason, which was this, that intolerance itself betrays a real lack of belief in those who show it: 'Here is very clearly my own sentiment on this point: it is that no true believer can possibly be an intolerant or a persecutor. If I were a magistrate, and the law carried a death penalty for atheists, I would begin by having burned as such whoever would come to denounce another.'¹ But to return to the story of Wolmar. He had betaken himself to metaphysics where he found nothing but doubts and contradictions—exactly as Rousseau himself had discovered—only Wolmar adopted a different attitude, of combating all dogmas and assuming a position of scepticism. And this was the husband of Julie, herself a true theist, one who contemplated God in His Works and loved Him as the common Father of all mankind. Wolmar stood beside her, and yet, 'in that great harmony of beings where all speaks of God in so sweet a voice, he perceives nothing but an eternal silence'. He never dogmatised, or said anything that would prejudice their children. It was simply a case where the 'internal proof or the proof of sentiment is missing, which is the only proof that can make all the others invincible'.² This Julie recognised, and she quietly grieved, and prayed for him.

Where Julie was silent, conscious of the futility of argument, young St. Preux showed a disposition to engage Wolmar in dispute. The two men were at grips on the subject of evil, recalling the exchange of views between Voltaire and Rousseau. 'I was struggling, for my part, to show that the origin of physical evil is in the nature of matter, and of moral evil in the liberty of man. I maintained that God could do everything except create other substances as perfect as His Own, and which admit of no evil.'³ This meant a surrender of Omnipotence or the attribute of perfect Power. It was not satisfactory, a fact symbolised by Julie's leaving the room and betaking herself to her own chamber in prayer. There was something more needed than the first piece of reasoning with which Rousseau had countered Voltaire in his *Letter on Providence*.

Before going on with his subsequent reflections, Rousseau was probably interrupted by having to work on the proofs of his *Letter to D'Alembert* which were coming in fast during the summer. In going over some of the scenes painted so ideally by his fancy he was moved to do them once again and better. And the reviewing of the moral issues that had occupied him so deeply

¹ Letter 5, p. 413, and note.

² Letter 5, pp. 414-16.

³ Ibid., p. 417.

in that *Letter* made him think further about them and write out more of his reflections. Thus the book of *Julie* grew still larger, with additions that developed farther the themes of the *Letter* in defence of Geneva against the demoralising influence of Paris. The novel was drawing everything of interest to him into itself.

Thus there was a letter of eloquence on 'the simplicity of the pastoral and rural life' where mankind have their first vocation. The joys of the seasons were depicted and the doings of men and women at work in the harvest, and at play, singing, dancing, feasting, following the native practices that bring them together in happy association.¹

From that idyll the story passed to Julie's fondest wish, that all around her might be happy as she was, that there might be a union between her former lover and her widowed friend, Claire. But the two friends, despite a liking for each other, were perversely reluctant. The impulsive and susceptible hero who, it was said, was 'always perpetrating some madness and always making a start at being wise',² was not rash on this occasion. And Claire held back with laudable feminine modesty. Then Julie set out to persuade them both, and the resulting discussions on the subject of marriage projected the story into its Sixth Part.

The true basis of marriage, what is it? St. Preux would have nothing to do with a marriage that was 'arranged', even if the arranging were done by his beloved Julie. Freedom is as essential here as in all other human associations. So personal a union must come about naturally, by spontaneous and irresistible affections on both sides. The first duty of a friend is to respect that freedom, and the next to be sure that both parties know what they are doing. Thus St. Preux did feel it was his duty, when Milord Edward went astray and became infatuated with a woman beneath him, to bring him to his senses and help him out of his slavery to his passion. Thus a friend can really aid another in giving him a discernment of his own good; but he cannot give him the will to follow that good. Thus St. Preux argued, for the cause of liberty.

The theme of liberty, or perhaps it was the proof-reading of the *Letter*, recalled Geneva. He was now disposed to be somewhat more critical of that 'little republic' than he was when refuting D'Alembert. Their 'ancient simplicity' was all but gone, and likewise their 'proud liberty'. But one thing was still there, to be cherished against loss, and it was the last stronghold of morals, the family. 'I don't believe there is any part of the world where married people are more united and homes are

¹ Letter 7.

² Letter 10, p. 434.

better than in that city. The domestic life is agreeable and sweet: one sees husbands who make an effort to please, and almost other Julies. Your system is very well confirmed here. The two sexes gain in every way by giving themselves different occupations and amusements, which prevent them from wearying each other and make it that they come together again with so much the more pleasure. . . .'¹ But, of course, this ancient system was already beginning to decline from influences beyond the city itself.

Once again the argument about marriage was taken up, this time along the lines of the moral argument of the *Letter to D'Alembert*: 'One stifles great passions, but rarely purifies them.' So it is no way to chasten the emotion of sex to let it be continually aroused day after day. The will may rise to mastery often in great crises but it cannot withstand the insensible and steady pull of nature. The part of wisdom is either to flee, or avoid the temptation, or else change the whole situation so as not to be contradicting nature. Since Julie wanted the society of St. Preux she favored the last alternative, and, on the principles of St. Paul, urged him to marry. But marriage was not to be regarded merely as a legitimate meeting of physical wants. It ministers to the desire for immortality when it eventuates in parenthood. For, as the philosophic Wolmar had said, repeating Plato, 'It seems that life is a good that one receives only at the charge of transmitting it, a sort of substitution which ought to pass from race to race; and it seems, too, that whoever has had a father is obliged to become one'.² So marriage is right and proper for every one, because it is in accord with the nature of man and his religious aspirations for immortality. In this light St. Preux's 'proud liberty' no longer seemed so noble as he pretended. There was too much pride in it, too great a sureness of his own moral strength, too little acknowledgement of the limits of the will and the weakness of human nature. He was right enough in his idea that virtue consists in 'following the laws he prescribes to himself'. But he was too much in danger of making his proud liberty consist of a sheer desire for independence of all ties and obligations. Let him stop being the philosopher, leave off this heroic pretension to virtue, and come down to a little Christian humility about himself. Thus Rousseau lectured himself in the words of Julie.³

While it is meet for man to confess his dependence, even upon his fellow men as well as upon Nature and God, it is often too hard for him to acknowledge his faults and wrongs to others,

¹ H. v. Pt. 6, Letter 5, especially p. 18.

² Pt. 6, Letter 4, p. 14; cf. Plato, *Laws*, 721, 773-4.

³ Letter 5, pp. 23-6.

and then it is that he must have recourse to prayer, in solitude. Such were the impulses of Rousseau's mind as he walked about the woods of Montmorency. But his thoughts about this salutary act, this confession of weakness, were in something of a turmoil. As usual, then, they took the form of a discourse with himself. Thus Julie started the discussion with a defense of prayer as a necessary supplement to the self-reliant conscience of man. 'We are free, of course, but we are ignorant, feeble, and led to do evil. And whence comes to us the light and the force, if it be not from Him who is the source of it all. And how could we obtain these powers if we did not begin to ask for them.' But St. Preux pretended to have an idea of God too sublime to admit of a relation with man through prayer. God is not to be described in terms of personal experience: He is not like a Father caring for every one of his sons alike, and guarding the very last one of them against hurt even of his own doing. So the philosophers had often spoken, scorning a too-human conception of the Deity, writers like Malebranche, Spinoza, and Bayle. Then Julie acutely observed that their very denial of a 'particular Providence', of a God interested in every last detail and life, that this itself is only based upon an induction from human experience: man has a narrow capacity for love of others; he devotes himself commonly to one other person or a few familiar to him, ignoring the rest of humanity; at the best he can only render others what is their due according to general laws of justice, the nearest approach to the loving kindness enjoined upon the Christian—and, arguing from this experience of our humanly limited charity, we pretend it to be quite impossible for a Being to exist and work in the world who is a true and perfect Providence, with wisdom, justice, and mercy that is all perfect, who looks out for every individual soul and for all humanity without exception or favor, preserving, admonishing, guiding, and finally receiving them unto Himself. Why should the concept of God be based on what is observed in the doings of men instead of upon the ideal of perfection that every man recognises in his own heart and by means of which, indeed, he knows how very limited his human justice, and wisdom, and charity are?¹

In reply St. Preux admitted the undoubted presence of these ideals of perfection in his own consciousness. But he put in a good word for the modern way of reasoning by analogy with our experience. For it is only by so doing that we can properly

¹ Letter 6, pp. 25 ff. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 887, where it is to be shown 'that there are Gods, and that they are good, and regard justice more than men do'. And also, 900, 'that the Gods care about the small as well as about the great'. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 3, ch. 9, sect. 4; bk. 4, ch. 11, sect. 2, p. 402 f.

conceive of the agency of God in the world. Thus, as Malebranche declared, himself a believer in the proof from the idea of perfection, God must be conceived always to have a general will and to work according to general laws, and never to violate the laws He himself has prescribed—a view which will later be seen to imply that God is no doer of special miracles in the world of men. 'For, while it is true that His Power has no need of method for shortening his work, it is worthy of His Wisdom, however, to prefer the ways that are most simple, to the end that there is nothing futile in the agencies any more than in the effects. In creating man He has endowed him with all the faculties necessary for the accomplishing of what He requires of him; and when we beseech Him to give us the power to do good, we ask for nothing but what He has already given us. He has given us reason so that we may know what is the good, conscience so that we may love it, and liberty in order that we may choose it. It is in these sublime gifts that divine grace consists, and as we have received them all we are held accountable for the use of them all.'¹

That is to say, the human conscience and will must on no account be depreciated, in order to exalt the virtue of humility and to make confession of dependence. For man's liberty of will is directly attested in 'internal feeling', exactly as the reality of God is attested. The two sentiments are on a par: one must not be undervalued over against the other. 'It is not at all true that we only suppose ourselves to be active and free; we are *aware* that we *are* thus free.'² And all the proofs of philosophy against such a truly active role of spirit are just as futile as are those of the Bishop of Cloyne himself against the reality of the external world. Indeed, it is the very method of the philosophers that is absurd in such cases: they begin by supposing something true, and then show that, in accordance with that supposition, something else that is *plainly real*, cannot possibly exist—they claim to demonstrate the non-existence of something directly intimated in human consciousness.

Finally, St. Preux takes exception to the doctrine of Providence or Grace because it leads people to the notion of special favors and a 'divine election'. This is shocking to one's sense of justice, and God is not God if He is not just. Even if the

¹ Letter 7, especially p. 33; Malebranche, on self-reliance, *ibid.*, p. 100.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4; cf. Plutarch, *Moralia*, *On Those who are Punished by the Deity Late*, sect. 18: 'It is one and the same argument . . . that confirms the Providence of the Deity and the permanence of the soul of man, so that you cannot leave one if you take away the other.' Plutarch follows Plato in the *Republic* and *Laus*, bk. 10, 891-2; 896, 903; bk. 12, 967-8; cf. Malebranche, *Méd.* 2; *Nature et Grâce* (Liberty); *Recherche*, bk. 1, ch. 10; bk. 3, ch. 7.

doctrine of special revelation and grace to certain individuals and nations be found in the Holy Scripture, one ought to honor God above the written word: 'rather believe the Bible falsified, or unintelligible, than that God is unjust or capable of evil'. St. Paul did not want the vase to ask the potter, 'Why hast thou made me so?' Well, if the potter requires of the vase a usage for which it is never made, it may very rightly put that question. St. Preux sticks to the judgment of his conscience which demands that there shall be justice in the supreme order of things; and with that conscience goes a pride, of course, that the Saints would fain exorcise.

Nevertheless, this amended doctrine of St. Preux's is not a denial of the value of prayer. 'All the acts of the understanding which raise us up to God, take us above ourselves; in imploring his help we learn to find it for ourselves. It is not He who changes us; it is we who change ourselves in lifting ourselves up toward Him. . . . One augments one's power in recognising one's weakness.'¹

Then Julie is cautioned against the 'abuse of prayer', and mystical devotions. 'Too much time spent in it exhausts the spirit, lights up the imagination, and creates visions so that one becomes inspired, prophetic, and is on the way to fanaticism.' Rousseau had reflected upon Vernes' objection to the religion of the inner consciousness in one living alone and apart from a communion. He recognised a danger for himself, that he might become like that other Swiss writer, Beat de Muralt, of whose *Letters on the English and French* he was so fond, but who ended up with his mad, pietistic book on *The Divine Instinct*.²

But in Julie's reply to St. Preux there is Rousseau's justification of his own faith, as he would have liked to tell it to Vernes. 'Not finding anything here below which suffices to my soul, it seeks greedily elsewhere to content itself: in lifting itself up to the source of its feeling and being, it loses its thirst and its weariness, it gets a new birth, it revives, it finds there a new resource, it draws a new life, it takes on another existence which has nothing to do with the passions of the body; or rather it is no longer in myself, it is wholly in the immense being which it contemplates; and, freed for a moment from its bonds, it consoles itself by entering, through that effort, into a state more sublime which it some day hopes will be all its own. . . . I myself have condemned the mystics; I condemn them more when they detach

¹ Letter 7, pp. 34-5.

² Ibid., see also the extraordinary letter to 'a young man' cautioning him against 'the contemplative life' and advising the practice of morality in his home and place in the world. *C.G.*, vol. iii, No. 499.

us from our duties, and when making us disgusted with active life because of the charms of contemplation, they lead us to that quietism, to which you think me so dangerously near and from which I am really as far as you yourself. To serve God does not mean to pass one's life on one's knees in an oratory; that I know full well; it is to fulfil on earth the duties He has imposed upon us. . . . One must first of all do what one ought, and then pray when one can; there is the rule I try to follow. . . . The God I serve is a clement God, a Father: what moves me most is His Goodness; that effaces, for my eyes, all His other attributes; it is the only one I really conceive. His Power appals me; His Immensity confounds me; His Justice. . . . Well, He has made man weak; since He is just, He is clement. The vengeful God is the God of the wicked; I can neither fear Him for myself nor call upon Him against another. "O God of peace, God of goodness, Thou art He whom I adore. It is of Thee, I feel I am the work; and I hope to find Thee again at the last judgment such as Thou hast been speaking to my heart during my life. . . ." I like no more than do you that mystical and figurative language which feeds the heart with chimeras of the imagination, and substitutes for the veritable love of God feelings imitated from earthly love and only too proper to rekindle it. The more one has a tender heart and lively imagination, the more one ought to avoid whatever tends to move it thus; for in the end, how can one see the relations to the mystical object if one does not also see the sensual object itself? And how dare a good woman imagine safely objects which she would not dare to contemplate in reality? But what has most alienated me from those who are devout by profession is the asperity of their morals which renders them insensible to humanity; it is the excessive pride which makes them look with pity on the rest of the world. In their sublime elevation, if they deign to lower themselves to some act of kindness, it is in a manner so humiliating; they accuse each other in a tone so cruel, their justice is so rigorous, their charity is so harsh, their zeal so bitter, their contempt so very much like hate, that the insensibility itself of the men of the world is less barbarous than their commiseration. Their love of God serves them as an excuse for loving no one; they do not even love each other. Does one ever see veritable friendship amongst the devout? No, the more they detach themselves from men, the more they require of them; and one might say that they only elevate themselves to God in order to be able to exercise His authority on earth.¹

Intolerance, then, is the worst fault in religion. For error is

¹ Letter 8, pp. 41-4.

no crime. 'Is one master to believe or not to believe?' 'No, no, kindness, honesty, morals, goodness, virtue, there is what Heaven requires and rewards; there is the true cult which God wishes of us. . . . If God judges of faith by works, it is to believe in Him simply to be a man of good deeds. The true Christian? Why he is simply the just man; the true unbelievers are the wicked.' It is not necessary then to go into the abysses of metaphysics in order to find a faith—to do one's duty as one finds it decreed in one's own heart is enough.¹

The very model of Christian wisdom and conduct is Julie in her relations with her unbelieving husband. Her aim is 'not any longer to try to convince him but to touch him; it is to show him an example which will lead him to follow after; it is to render religion so dear to him that he cannot resist it. Ah my friend, what an argument against the unbeliever is the life of the true Christian'.²

The novel comes to an end, in a turmoil of emotion, with Julie dying, and holding improbably long discourse in order to say the many things that might safely be said by one at the point of death. A minister of the Gospel comes into the picture—one may fancy, perhaps, Vernes arriving at Montmorency—and he surrenders before the natural piety of Julie, and bears testimony to the truth of her religious belief as she spoke thus: 'I have lived, and I die, in the Protestant communion, which derives its sole law from the Holy Scripture and from reason. . . . I have always sought sincerely for that which would be conformable to the glory of God and the truth. I may have been mistaken in my researches: I am not so proud as to think I have always been right; perhaps I have always been wrong; but my intention has been pure, and I have always believed what I said I believed. That is all that depended on myself in this matter. If God has not enlightened my reason beyond that, well, He is clement and just: why would He demand an accounting from me for a gift He has not given? . . . To what torments could God condemn my soul? . . . O great Eternal Being, Supreme Intelligence, Source of life and of felicity, Creator, Preserver, Father of man and Ruler of nature, God Almighty and Very-God, of whose Being I do not doubt for a moment, and under whose eyes I have always loved to live, I know it, I rejoice in it, I am going to appear before Thy throne. In a few days my soul, free of its trappings, will begin to offer Thee more worthily that immortal homage which should make my happiness during eternity. I count as nothing all that I shall be up to that moment. My body still lives, but my moral existence is done. I am at the

¹ Letter 8, pp. 44-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

term of my career, and already judged by the past. . . . One who falls asleep on the bosom of a Father need have no care about an awakening.¹

A little later Julie's spirit revived enough to utter an astonishing thanksgiving: 'Let us give thanks to Heaven that we have not been born into those venal religions which kill people in order to inherit from them, and which, selling paradise to the rich, carry over into the other world the unjust inequality that reigns in this one here.'²

And later still, like Socrates in his prison when he was about to die, she voiced a conviction in the immortality of the soul, and added, that it will remain forever in touch with all dear to it on earth, by 'an immediate communication like that by which God reads our thoughts of this life and by which we in turn read His thoughts in the other life when we shall see Him face to face. . . . The Eternal Being is neither seen nor heard; He intimates Himself; He speaks neither to the eyes nor the ears, but to the heart'.³

The book of *Julie*, in Six Parts, was 'entirely finished' by September 13, 1758. The last two Parts were the fruit of another solitary summer enjoyed in Nature. They turned the story of Julie into something very different from the sheer romance of two years past. They made it a moral lesson in very appealing form; and so the book was called *The New Héloïse*. And besides a lesson of undying love they contained what was virtually a first draft of a *Treatise on Education* and a *Profession of Faith*. Rousseau was now content with this work and he intended to publish it.⁴

But discontent stalked behind. Early in October the *Letter to D'Alembert*, with which he had been also occupied during the summer, made its public appearance. Pleased with it on the whole, he had copies sent to his various friends in France and in Geneva. No one could fail to notice the reference in the *Preface* to the friend who had betrayed him; and people responded in various ways. Rey the publisher could scarcely believe that it referred to Diderot. From distant Liège, Deleyre wrote, utterly taken aback, and personally hurt, too, because nothing of this piece of writing had been confided to him. 'It is true', Rousseau replied to him, 'that I have not spoken a word to you about my writing on the theatre, because, as I have told you more than

¹ Letter 8, pp. 55-7.

² Ibid, p. 58.

³ Ibid., p. 65; cf. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 1, ch. 2, sect. 4, p. 350; *Méditations Chrétiennes*, Méd. 10, sect. 18.

⁴ *Letter to Rey*, Sept. 13, 1758, C.G., vol. iv, No. 539.

once, I could not trust myself to you.' And the reason for withholding his inmost thoughts lay in these beseeching words: 'Dear Deleyre, watch out for your satirical spirit; and particularly, learn to respect religion. Humanity alone demands that respect.' For Rousseau could not now love or confide in a friend who lacked it. Deleyre answered again, to promise that he would not attack religion in the *Journal* he was editing; but he could not get over his surprise at this sudden insistence upon religious belief as essential to a completely human and moral life. 'Say, if you like, that the religious man will make sacrifices which every other one might not make; without doubt that is so, but don't go to extremes, dear Citizen, and remember that you have not always been so convinced a believer as now; and yet, were you then any the less virtuous?' And 'why declaim still against the philosophers?' Such things hurt Deleyre, who believed himself a true disciple; but what affected him most of all was the evidence that his master wanted no association such as he had cherished of old in the days when Diderot and the two of them worked together in Paris. 'You do not want any more friends, obviously, since you renounce the best friend that you have ever had, according to your own avowal.'¹

One friend of both fired up in generous revolt at the public disavowal, St. Lambert. 'In truth, Sir, I cannot accept the present that you have made me. In a place in your Preface, where, with regard to Diderot, you cite a passage of *Ecclesiastes*, [*sic*] the book fell away from my hands. After the conversations of last summer, you appeared to be convinced that Diderot was innocent of the pretended indiscretions which you imputed to him. He may have done wrong to you; that I don't know but I do know very well that he has not given you the right to offer him a public insult. You are not unaware of the persecutions from which he suffers, and you go mixing the voice of an old friend with the cries of envy. I cannot conceal from you, Sir, how much that atrocity revolts me. I do not go with Diderot; but I honor him, and I feel very much the grief you will cause a man whom, at least when speaking to me, you have never reproached for anything except a little weakness. Sir, we differ too much in matters of principle for us ever to get along with each other. Forget my existence. . . . I promise you, Sir, to forget your person, and to remember only your talents.'

Now Rousseau had taken great pains to have St. Lambert receive a special copy like that sent D'Alembert himself. The spurning of his gift, and the reflection on his character, exempting

¹ To Deleyre, Oct. 5, No. 546; from same, Oct. 28, No. 547.

only the talents, roused the old pride in him to reply: 'Sir, in reading your letter, I did you the honor to be surprised at it, and I have been foolish enough to be moved by it; but I have found it unworthy of response.' And there followed a few lines to say that he did not want to continue making the copies for Mme d'Houdetot, and that they should drop their relations entirely.¹

But St. Lambert seems to have been persuaded that he had been too harsh. In two weeks' time an invitation came to Rousseau from M. d'Épinay, to come to dinner where he would meet his old friends, and among them, it was especially mentioned, St. Lambert and Mme d'Houdetot. The reunion took place, and so the break never occurred.²

Rousseau learned from that meeting with Mme d'Houdetot that he was now proof against his old passion. Reflection and work had brought about an effacement. The later scenes of *Julie* at her duties in the family and at her worship supplanted the first luring pictures of romance. And the author who had worked his way to freedom believed that the effect of the novel upon others would be the same, so that it would teach morality, and in a more convincing way than discourses on first principles, provided, of course, the reader would really finish the book and not leave off at the love-story. But even if the moral dénouement were read, had he himself not already proved, in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, that the moral of a romantic piece is not the really lasting impression from it? This inconsistency bothered him not a little after finishing the work. And it troubled him more during the subsequent months when the letters of congratulation on his reply to D'Alembert came in from his various Genevan friends who were mostly professors at the University or ministers of the Gospel, for they proved themselves more the moralist than he and with one accord condemned the 'circles' and dancing in public, and deprecated any attempt to legitimatise such practices. The moral conditions, according to them, were far worse than the absent citizen supposed. The author of *Julie* began to realise that his new novel would never be welcome at Geneva, and that he would have to justify himself to his friends there for its publication. He eventually composed a *Second Preface to Julie* in which he argued, tantalisingly, with an imaginary interlocutor, and repeated the thesis of his *Preface to Narcisse*, but he then decided not to publish this seeming apology with the romance itself. He still wanted the book to stand entirely on its own merits, and would only afterwards issue his explanation

¹ From St. Lambert, Oct. 10, 1758, No. 552; to same, Oct. 11, No. 553.

² From de La Live, Oct. 26, No. 554.

for the benefit of the clergy.¹ As an artist he was too fond of his handiwork to want to spoil it with arguments; and the moralist within himself was quite content, because this work had given him another start upon the greater projects of his life which still waited to be shaped into form as a treatise on education and a profession of faith.

¹ See J.-J. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (nouv. édit.), D. Mornet, vol. i, pp. 48-9, 88-9.

CHAPTER XV

PROJECTS AT MONTMORENCY

'C'est un assez beau roman que celui de la nature humaine.'

Émile, II., vol. ii, p. 387.

ROUSSEAU proceeded to his book on Education. During the next two years he was at work upon this project as well as continuing what he had already begun toward his treatise on Politics.¹ This period marked another effort, made against odds of all sorts, and particularly distraction caused by others and by poverty. This time he was steadily at one with himself and in command of his genius. Withal, he enjoyed a real measure of liberty in his own quarters at Montmorency. The result was success, and the achievement of more than one masterpiece.

The very great success of the *Letter to D'Alembert* in the Fall of 1758 was of itself an incentive to go on with other 'useful' writings. Approving messages came thronging in for several months, chiefly, of course, from his fellow countrymen, for his book had stirred up a patriotic revival both in Geneva itself and among the Genevan expatriates scattered throughout Europe. Some of the letters were from very old friends and honorable men of affairs, such as Gauffécourt, Lenieps, and Roguin who lived in France, and J. F. De Luc in Geneva, men who were always ready to applaud him and to help him, so far as they were permitted, in matters of business where they had more knowledge. Then, too, there were others from his 'disciples', the younger men of letters in Geneva, professors and ministers, notably Vernes, Roustau, Perdriau, and Moultau, who wrote fully to him, giving criticism as well as appreciation—and, incidentally, they were all agreed in declaring him quite in error about the value of the 'circles' which seemed to them irredeemably vicious institutions. The letters of all these friends and enthusiasts called for answers that took time and energy, which, however, he was pleased to give, for he was immensely heartened by their approval.²

One of the recipients, however, of the complimentary copies distributed in Geneva was Dr. Tronchin, the friend and physician of Mme d'Épinay, to whom Rousseau had confided, several years past, his difficulty with the Le Vasseur family, and the fact,

¹ To M. de la Live, Oct. 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 890; cf. to Mme de Luxembourg, Oct. 6, No. 888, and *Confessions*, H., vol. viii, p. 370.

² The letters and answers run from October 1758 to January 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, pp. 80-157.

too, that he had turned over his own children to the State for rearing. In his reply of thanks Dr. Tronchin somewhat pointedly asserted that the conditions of Plato's Republic could never be realised in the modern State, and that education, in particular, could never be public but must be, even in a small state like Geneva, entirely domestic, an affair of the parents themselves. This criticism was a little too personal, and probably gave Rousseau a set determination to expound and justify his own view on this subject of education in the home.¹

There was an event in Geneva of personal interest to him which probably sent his thought farther along that direction, the marriage of his friend and disciple, Vernes. Here were two young people setting out upon the career of marriage which he himself had started wrongly, and so spoiled for himself that he could never set his household in true order. The thought of them, 'the dear children', made him write a most delightful, whole-hearted letter, blessing them, and assuring them, in words which, but a short while afterwards he was to repeat to his imaginary pupil Émile, upon a similar occasion: 'To the good, marriage is a paradise on earth.'² Yet as he wrote such felicitations to Vernes who was well off in things of this world, he himself was dwelling with Thérèse in a tumble-down house, in poverty and with scarcely the means of subsistence. He was all out of funds and too proud to accept financial aid from the many friends who would have liked to tender it. Some money might eventually come in from the sale of the *Julie*, but the manuscript was not clean enough for the printer and would have to be recopied, which would take a long time. Nevertheless, despite the winter's cold, and the poverty and anxiety, his thought was on his prospective book which would teach the way to bring up man to goodness, and thereby to an assured happiness in a paradise on earth.

It seems, too, that the story of Julie was still running on in his imagination. Of course, the person of Julie herself was gone from the scene, but her children remained. He had fancied himself, in the story, as the governor of those children, and he now tended to go on to imagine how he would rear them according to her maxims, so that they might attain to the happiness which was not permitted to Julie herself because of her fault. The education of Émile and Sophie thus took form in his thoughts as a continuation of the story of *Julie* into the next generation.

On the other hand, the treatise on education had been

¹ From Dr. Tronchin, Nov. 13, No. 573; to same, Nov. 26, No. 581, p. 142f.

² To Vernes, Jan. 6, 1759, No. 588.

intended from the first as a systematic exposition, based on the *Project for Education*, first sketched for the children of De Mably and then revised for Mme Dupin. He had been urged to continue by her daughter-in-law, Mme de Chenonceaux, an old friend for whom he had very great respect and affection, and whom he was very anxious to aid in her brave efforts at bringing up her children properly in her own household. The ideas he had struck out in the later parts of *Julie* were, therefore, to be elucidated, developed, and put into more regular form in a treatise. To this end he felt, however, that he needed more material and he besought help from an older woman, Mme de Créquy, a very thoughtful and pious person whose own heart was in rebellion against the education in vogue, which had sent her son to the army where he became dissipated, and her daughter to a convent, separated from her and no longer her own child. Mme de Créquy felt little equal, however, to the task he laid upon her, of supplying him with wisdom on the subject.¹ He was in the end forced to draw chiefly upon the store of his own observations of sheltered children in the wealthy households where he had been intimate, and on the other hand what he witnessed outside his own quarters at Montmorency, the country children as they ran and jumped and shouted in their play the whole day long, these observations, supplemented, too, by what he could recall from his own youth. Out of all these he was to compose his treatise. But his plan for it was not yet decided, for he was apparently torn between a systematic treatment and this freer way of handling the subject in a story of the life of two children from the cradle to their blessed union in marriage, the ideal couple, Émile and Sophie.²

Even so, there was a period from January 1759 until May of that year which was so harassing that it must have withheld his attention considerably from his project on education in whatever form. His poverty had now become sheer distress. Nothing at all was being earned for his daily bread. He had started plans to get out a collection of his published writings which would yield immediate returns, but was blocked in this by Rey who had the rights to two of the pieces and would not consent to their inclusion in any edition made by others. Though he felt he had something of a grievance against Rey, because a second edition of the *Letter to D'Alembert* had been meantime produced without his knowledge or correction, and without any royalty, he nevertheless refused to adopt the suggestion of De Luc of

¹ To Mme de Créquy, Jan. 15, 1759, No. 590; cf. previous correspondence, Nos. 557, 589, and her reply Jan. 20, 1759, No. 591.

² To Mme Dupin, Jan. 19, No. 592.

Geneva, that he reprint the collection anyhow since the laws and customs of France permitted it. His reply was that of an honest man: he had, in his own mind, never made any reservation to himself of the rights to subsequent editions of works which Rey had published, and he considered himself still bound by a rule of conscience, no matter what might be legal. This attitude, when Rey eventually learned of it, was destined to earn him respect and friendship, and in the end very great services; but at the moment he derived no benefit from his honesty.¹ He cast about, then, for some other means of securing ready money. He commissioned De Luc to request from Mme d'Épinay the return of the manuscript of his opera, *Les Muses galantes*, but the piece had gone astray and could not be produced. He remembered also his opera *Le Devin du village* which had been given many times at Paris and from which he was getting nothing, although there had been an original contract with the directors by which he was entitled to perpetual rights of admission to the performances thereof, rights of which he was not at the moment able to avail himself—but the fact was that they had been revoked on the occasion of his *Letter on Music* (July 1754), an action which constituted a breach of contract, and, so he claimed at this late day, ground for demanding the opera back again—and he hoped to sell it this time to better advantage to himself since he was now in a better position to bargain. But the authorities were not so sensitive to the spirit of 'contract' as he himself was in dealing with his publishers; the directors went their way producing the opera. Duclos, the official historiographer of France, to whom the work had been dedicated, and his friend the banker, Lenieps, both tried to secure something for him, but in vain, partly because Rousseau himself became so aroused over the injustice of those in power that he was intransigent, repudiated their negotiations, and wanted to exact his full dues from the directors all by himself. This business dragged on to no satisfaction, and with a great lot of angry correspondence.² Meantime Rey was ready to do some printing and asked for the novel *Julie* and also for the terms on which he himself would be allowed to publish the projected general edition of his works. Here, again, Rousseau had scruples, as he said, about being the judge in his own case, and he replied by leaving the terms to Rey, who again answered and said that he would gladly accept any proposal, admitting

¹ To De Luc, Feb. 9, No. 597.

² To Comte Saint-Florentin, Feb. 11, No. 599; to Duclos, Feb. 13 and 21, Nos. 600, 603; from Duclos, Feb. 14, 19, Nos. 601, 602. Correspondence with Lenieps, periodically from Apr. 2 and 5, Nos. 619, 620, and May 7, No. 632.

that he had made a handsome sum from these publications and was desirous of having the author himself completely satisfied. What Rousseau stipulated was that he should receive just enough to provide him with means of a livelihood during the period when he would be engaged upon the revision of the writings for the general edition because he could not afford to spend that time without earning. On March 14, 1759, an understanding with Rey was reached. And Rousseau settled down to making the printer's copy of *Julie*, hoping to complete one Part every month, and expecting from Rey an instalment of the payment upon delivery of each successive portion of the work. In this way the financial provision was made which set him free to accomplish his tasks.¹

During the months of March and April then he was busy retracing once again the romantic incidents of Parts 1 and 2 of the *Julie*. After so much copying this work must have begun to seem what he later dubbed it, 'a miserable and flat romance'.² The recollections of the elements of truth in it were no longer pleasant and they were made less so by some more correspondence with Dr. Tronchin. This arose from the fact that Rousseau had sent him a letter on behalf of a poor neighbor for whose health he was concerned, and he had described the ailment and asked for diagnosis and treatment, mentioning, by way of excuse for the request that he himself had no more contacts with Paris, to be able to apply there for the assistance. This appeal for an act of mercy was answered with veiled brutality, unpleasant hints about the mental health and character of a person like himself who no longer had any friends, etc.—all reminding him of the break with Mme d'Épinay on account of his love for Mme d'Houdetot.³ And he now wanted to forget all that, and this story of *Julie* as well, which kept reminding him of it. He preferred to conjure up in fancy the two new figures, Émile and Sophie, and to work out their education and their happiness. And he seems to have given up the systematic plan of his original *Project for Education*, in favour of the novel form.⁴

¹ Correspondence of Rey and Rousseau from Feb. 19 to Mar. 14, Nos. 605, 607, 608, 610, 611.

² It was not until the following year that he explicitly admitted this feeling about *Julie*—to Malessierbes, Mar. 6, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 756; to Mme de Luxembourg, Dec. 12, 1760, No. 946 ('that long string of honeyed words and dull galimatias'); to Jacob Vernet, Nov. 29, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 930, and to Lenieps, Dec. 11, No. 944.

³ From Tronchin, May 7, 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 633, and subsequent letters No. 646, 655, 656.

⁴ To Mme Dupin, May 6, 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 631. This letter may refer, however, to some other piece 'written for the public and not for the ministers', possibly a sketch of a life of Abbé de St. Pierre in which Mme Dupin was also interested—

It so happened that the dilapidated roof of his house at Mont-Louis had given way and made it too dangerous to live there, forcing Thérèse and himself to take shelter in a neighboring peasant's house until repairs could be made. For some time other neighbors, wealthy and titled ones, had been interested in him and his plight, Chevalier de Lorenzy and Marshal and Mme de Luxembourg, and on this occasion they besought him to accept quarters in an apartment of the Little Château which was situated in a beautiful park with a lake and all the vernal surroundings he loved. They seemed so tactful and wise in their understanding of his need of peace and liberty and solitude that he gratefully accepted, though with some belated trepidations when he remembered how deeply accountable he had rendered himself in the eyes of the world for the stay at the Hermitage of Mme d'Épinay. Still, the day he took up his abode in the lovely place he wrote ecstatically to Mme de Luxembourg: 'All my letter is in the date.' It was the 6th of May and the season of poetic genius.¹

Three weeks thereafter he wrote to the Marshal: 'You know . . . that the solitary all have the romantic spirit. I am full of that spirit; I am aware of it and do not trouble myself about it. . . .'² And it was in that spirit, conjured by the spring-time and the beauty of the surroundings, that he composed Book Five of *Émile*. It contained the climactic scenes of the career of his imaginary pupil, the wooing of Sophie, and, after a testing of their love, their union in a happy marriage.³

This was a romance pure and simple, though it 'ought to be the history of all my kind'.⁴ It is an ideal story of young love, natural and good. It begins with a chance rencontre, the two being made ready for each other in spirit by youthful 'enthusiasm for perfection' which each suddenly realises in the person of the other. The youth makes the advances, the girl, as is natural, is modest and avoiding. He is so ardent that he wants to be with her every moment and to take up his abode nearby, but is warned by his governor of the embarrassment such close attention might be to her, so they establish themselves about two leagues away, just within reach. The next episode is their

cf. Streckeisen-Moultou, *Œuvres et correspondance inédites de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 307 f. A letter to Mme Dupin of Jan. 19, 1759, No. 592, spoke of a copy of a *Mémoire*, which might refer either to the *Life* or to the *Project for Education*.

¹ Correspondence on this establishment at the Little Château, from Apr. 29 to May 6, Nos. 623, 624, 625, 628, 629, 630. The delights and fears are in letters of date May 21, No. 639 and May 27, No. 641. The recollection of Mme d'Épinay is apparent from the letter to Dr. Tronchin of May 30, No. 634.

² To Marshal de Luxembourg, May 27, No. 461.

³ *Confessions*, H., vol. viii, p. 374.

⁴ *Émile*, bk. 5, H., vol. ii, p. 387.

setting out on horseback to make a visit over a country road very much cut up and so difficult to follow that they lose their way, and Émile then proves the reality of his passion and the keenness of his mind by finding the way out to their destination and their welcome—the episode seems reminiscent of what happened in the case of a Sophie not imaginary who lost herself going across country from Éaubonne to the Hermitage. This new heroine recalls the Sophie of his life also in that she is one of those ‘people who think’, which is of the highest importance in marriage, ‘for the greatest charm of society is lacking to a man who has a wife and is reduced to thinking alone’.¹ In this Sophie is quite the perfect match for Émile. They learn from each other. ‘They regard each other as perfect, and they love each other, they talk to each other with enthusiasm about all that gives value to virtue.’² And their guide sees to it that here, as elsewhere, in their education they shall not be too precocious, make too great haste, and anticipate nature; they must not follow the common opinion that they are straightway to marry. Their affections must be matured and allowed to take on some consistency.³ They must undergo the tests of time and absence and acquire in their love the self-restraint needed for the future. So Émile has to absent himself and make journeys to see the world and know his place in it, exactly as St. Preux had to do in Part 4 of *Julie*, although in his case it was doing penance to nature, as it were, for being too forward. When this innocent lover, Émile, returns, intact and wise, without direct experience of evil, but yet having had observation of it in the world, he is then worthy to be a husband, and Sophie, too, to be his wife. And at their union they are given this promise, ‘that if they would prolong the happiness of love in marriage, they would have a paradise on earth’.⁴ This was the beautiful picture Rousseau had been wanting to paint over the old memories that had been revived by his copying of the early parts of the *Julie*: these new scenes of a chaste and restrained relationship, with their fresh charm, were a more adequate moral offset than the ending of that novel or the lesson of its title, *The New Héloïse*.

It is a fact, too, that he actually had the impulse, in a moment of irritation with Rey for delaying to send him an instalment of the money due him, to demand the return to him of the first two Parts of the *Julie*. He had been reluctant, as it was, to have the novel sold at all in Geneva, and he continued still to be uncertain about the wisdom of publishing it. However, he

¹ *Émile*, bk. 5, H., vol. ii, pp. 380, 391 ff.

³ pp. 377 ff.

² p. 398; cf. p. 363.

⁴ p. 448.

was now too far committed to publication and so he let the printing go ahead.¹

The sketch of the relations of Émile and Sophie developed a larger scope than that of merely exhibiting the last scene of the education of Émile. It became a distinct subject: *Sophie or Woman*. It dealt with the upbringing of the girl to womanhood. It was an inquiry into the education suitable for a woman so that she might be perfect according to her own nature. For it seemed obvious that there are differences of some moment between the sexes, and that the perfection of life for the one must be something distinctive and individual if one is to respect the variety of human nature. Moreover, it is plain to see that the education of woman has also to fit her for civil society. And this required a consideration of her place in the social order, matters on which Rousseau had already expressed his opinion very clearly in the *Letter to D'Alembert*. He was as sensitive as any one could be to the distinctive charms and characters of the sex, to attractiveness, intelligence, address, and not least, to proper modesty. Through his experience he had perceived how very largely appearances count in the social life of woman, and how any forwardness, immodesty, or even the adoption of men's roles and occupations and constant association with them, must cause trouble in the life of the affections and in the family.

And these sentiments were confirmed by an experience of the moment. His friend Deleyre came out to Montmorency one day bringing two women unknown to Rousseau, and the party in their eagerness to meet him became silly and made so bold as to spy upon him in his retreat. He was angry and rude to them, assuming from their boldness that the women were not honest, and taking down Deleyre very roughly in their presence. It happened, however, that one of them was Deleyre's sweetheart whom he wanted to present to his master—but after that unfortunate way of approaching him Rousseau was never persuaded that she was the paragon of virtue his disciple swore she was. He was over-sensitive on the score of feminine forwardness and too readily offended. And the result was that after desperate efforts on Deleyre's part to bring about an *entente cordiale* between his fiancée and his master, he was eventually married without his blessing and went his own way. But this was in the future.²

¹ To Rey, June 1, 1759, No. 644; June 21, No. 654; cf. letters exchanged on subject of sale in Geneva, Mar. 14 and Mar. 23, Nos. 610, 611, and especially his reluctance to tell Vernes anything about the *Julie*—July 23, Nov. 18, Nos. 663, 699.

² Correspondence with Deleyre from June 4 onwards, Nos. 645, 661, 675, 695,

At the moment, however, there was at hand a reply from D'Alembert, a published *Letter to Rousseau*, in which he warmly defended the cause of the equality of women and took him to task for denying them any genius or capacity for achievement in men's pursuits, a defense far warmer than that which he made of the theatre.¹ The opening portions of the book on *Sophie or Woman* seem to be a direct rejoinder to that *Letter*. Rousseau there insisted upon the differences of physique, interest and capacity between a woman and a man, and on the special requirements or duties for each sex. The training of the feminine character must be one primarily in docility and regard for opinion. Great emphasis must be laid upon those things because they have far-reaching significance in the relations of the sexes both before and after marriage. One of the most misleading ideas in Plato, therefore, was that of a 'civil promiscuity', the notion of a mingling of men and women in absolutely every function of the State. Girls must rather know what a home is, and be the companions of their mothers who must themselves live properly. Although virtue is fundamentally one and the same, it has different forms according to the manner of life that is natural to one or the other sex, and consequently there are distinctly feminine virtues and duties which no amount of enlightened philosophy can obscure from mankind. After insisting so strongly upon the special virtue and training of woman's character, Rousseau felt that he might have said too much—Was he not, for one thing, teaching women that 'their law was only public prejudice?' No, not that, but he meant to recall to them the requirements laid down by their own internal sentiments on which those so-called prejudices are based. Once their consciences are fully matured they may have all the intellectual education they desire and are capable of assimilating. On that score he was not reactionary to the philosophy of freedom advocated by his friend D'Alembert. But he wanted a more moderate position between the philosophic and the vulgar opinion: 'some limit woman to sewing and knitting in her household with her servants, and thus only make of her the first servant of the master: others, not content with securing her in her rights make her even usurp ours.' There is surely a true mean between a housekeeper and a *bel esprit*.²

708. There was, however, genuine warmth in one letter to Deleyre, according to his own reply of May 3, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 776. But Rousseau could not bring himself to complete friendship, as Deleyre's continual complaints indicate, July 30, No. 851, and Aug. 13, No. 855.

¹ Rousseau had noticed D'Alembert's reply, see letter to Lorenzi, May 21, 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, no. 639. See *Letter to Rousseau*, H., vol. i, pp. 288-91.

² *Emile*, pp. 353-4; p. 381.

Rousseau was following ancient moralists like Plutarch and the Christian writers and he adhered also to his ideal of the domestic life as envisaged in the Geneva of his *Letter*: 'Woman, honor thy husband; it is he who works for thee, who gains thy daily bread, who provides for thee; that's the man!' And 'Man, love thy companion. God has given thee her to console thee in thy troubles, to comfort thee in thy misfortunes; that's the woman'.¹ Let people but follow these two commandments and they will enjoy felicity with their virtue on this earth.

During June and July of 1759 two young ministers of Geneva, Roustan and Vernes, were continually beseeching him to come live with them in a milieu more suited to his own ideals. Deleyre reported, too, from Vienna where he had a position as tutor, that the poet Metastasio, an admirer of Rousseau, had asked him the very natural question why he did not go to live with the people whose morals he had so highly extolled.² But the prospects of a happy establishment there appeared not so bright to him as to those enthusiastic admirers. Dr. Tronchin and others were ill-disposed toward him. It was actually rumored about that he never would return to Geneva, talk which seemed to express a wish on their part, for he had said nothing to warrant such gossip. He had written to Dr. Tronchin to ask what were the 'charges' he had to answer, and received no satisfaction, and felt he was fencing with an antagonist who kept him in the dark, a professing friend who hinted at some grave defects. This correspondence convinced him he could never satisfy his desire to go back to Geneva so long as Dr. Tronchin and Mme d'Épinay were against him, as well as that 'master of pleasantries', Voltaire.³ He had to content himself with being the citizen *in absentia*, wherever he might have the chance to live. And so we find it written in Book Five of *Émile* that the hero in trying to decide where he might set up his household with Sophie, in what country, under what government, falls into despair at first because no place seems right to him, whereupon his guide in life reasons with him thus: 'Laws! Where are there any? And where is it they are respected? Everywhere you have seen ruling under that name only private interest and the passions of men. But the eternal laws of nature and of order exist. They take the place of positive law for the sage; they are written at the bottom of the heart by conscience and by reason:

¹ Ibid., pp. 409, 413.

² Correspondence, June 14, 1759, Nos. 652, 662; July 23, No. 663: 'Come, then, with us, I prepare a society of friends for you in the midst of which your heart would be well at ease . . .'; July 25, No. 664. From Deleyre at Vienna, July 4, No. 661.

³ Correspondence with Tronchin, Nos. 615, 633, 634, 655, 656, and allusions to rumors in correspondence with Vernes, Nos. 652, 663.

it is to them that he ought to subject himself in order to be free. . . . Liberty is not in any form of government, it is in the heart of the free man; he takes it everywhere with him.' And everywhere, too, a duty which he ought to fulfil in spirit, and that is an 'attachment to the place of one's birth'.¹ These were, no doubt, the reflections with which he had to content himself in his own exile at Montmorency in France. He was happy enough there, and liked his surroundings and neighbors. After his cottage was repaired he continued to keep his apartment at the Little Château and to enjoy the company of his hosts when they visited their beautiful estate. But he worked, nevertheless, to deserve those pleasures, and worked on behalf of principles which were his birthright from Geneva.

A considerable portion of his time was being still occupied, however, with the copying out of the *Julie*. He had been reading the novel to the Marshal and Mme de Luxembourg when they were in the country with him, or else when he visited them in their palace on the outskirts of Paris, and he promised them a personal copy from his own pen. Meantime he was also engaged upon the later parts of the book for Rey, and still owed copies thereof to Mme d'Houdetot. All this working over of the *Julie* was probably not the distraction it might seem to have been, for those latter Parts contained the first sketch of his plan and method of education, and in doing them he may have given his thoughts further organisation in his mind. He appears to have done some of this through conversation with the Marshal who was so taken with his 'advice' that he proposed to raise his own little grandson in accordance with it.² Thus, concurrently with the copying of the Fifth and Sixth Parts of *Julie*, it is likely that the first books of *Émile* were being formulated.³ And it is also possible that the *Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar*, the analogue and sequel of Julie's dying profession was written last of all, in the same order as in the novel.

The last part of the *Julie* was despatched to Rey on January 18, 1760. Immediately Rousseau plunged into the most strenuous efforts of composition. He labored so hard and protractedly that he suffered from serious nosebleeds and gave his solicitous neighbors great anxiety. But they could not stop him. He was determined to realise his projects and to finish his career.⁴

¹ *Émile*, pp. 445-6.

² From Marshal de Luxembourg, Sept. 27, 1759, No. 680.

³ Part 4 of *Julie* was ready early in October 1759; Part 5, Dec. 15; Part 6, Jan. 18, 1760 (note the length of time spent on Part 5). See letters to Rey, *C.G.*, vol. iv, Nos. 682, 709; *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 733.

⁴ Correspondence with Mmes de Verdelin and de Luxembourg, from January to July 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, Nos. 729, 730, 731, 734, 738, 842.

This work was undertaken to realise all that he had conceived ten years before. He had been emboldened by the offering of a prize to write the account of man going forward to his destruction, to injustice, mercilessness, vice, crime, and withal, the misery of civilisation. It was a sad 'genealogy of morals' he had depicted in the *Discourse on Inequality*. It was never the course intended for man by Nature, or by his Creator. Meant to be free, man becomes a slave to his desires as well as to the will of others; his healthy, natural responsiveness to life and persons and the beauty of order becomes a feverish, concentrated self-interest, choking all affection, generosity, and the very primal root of all kindness, sheer pity for the suffering of others; and man, who was destined to be happy and virtuous, makes himself most unhappy by factitious cravings and his illimitable and abnormal desires. This failure to attain the proper goals of human nature is due to man's own weakness and false values, abetted by circumstances which happened to favor an unnatural development, although Rousseau could not make it very plain, then, how these malignant traits of man actually are brought out. All this melancholy career was narrated in the form of a history of mankind in several epochs, from the supposed state of nature, through a state of natural society in the family or clan, to the state of civil society where it is the art and intention of men themselves that has most to do with the complexion of things. Such a history, in the *Discourse*, was only a way of representing graphically, and in the large, the moral tragedy in the life of every man in civilisation. Being presented as history, moreover, it hinted that things might be otherwise and man's moral career very different, if it were true to nature. But what is the natural man, and what the true order of his experience and life? These ideal conceptions Rousseau was now about ready to disclose, the ideals that had implicitly directed his criticism of the existing order of life and values. He now knew more in detail what manner of man he wanted, what a man ought to be as a child, a youth, a lover, a husband, a father, a citizen, and a worshipper. He now had a clearer insight into human nature and the relations of individuals to each other. His conception of the republic and the right order of social institutions was fairly well defined, together with that of the development of man's own body, character, and mind through education. All these views existed in divers sketches that wanted only to be given a definite form. He had now acquired, however, the habit of representing his ideas in a personal story, as a novelist, rather than on the great canvas of a history of civilisation or in the abstract ideas of philosophy. So he set about telling it all

in the story of Émile, a lone child spared the perverting suggestions and ways of a sophisticated world by a guardian who has his eye on the law of Nature, and intends to follow the march of Nature in the child from infancy to the time of maturity when he shall become a person of conscience and reason, fully master of himself, and therefore ready to marry and rear a family and assume the responsibilities of a citizen in society. The epochs in this career are to be the genuinely natural ones. The education is to be a progress in virtue more than in wit. Body, character, mind are all to be developed in the right order and at the right moment. The outcome is a just man and a happy one; and a true woman, too, in Sophie. When these two are united in marriage and stand at the beginning of a new generation, their story ends.

But it was not the end for Rousseau himself. It was also incumbent upon him to depict the right political order which befits such good men and women, and so he was led on by the inherent logic of his own life-work to the finishing of his other project which had likewise been born of the *Discourse on Inequality*, the *Treatise on Political Right*, or, as it came to be entitled from the chief essay which composed it, *The Social Contract*. It was in the large project on *Political Institutions* he had once intended to pour all his thoughts for the reform of human nature and institutions, even, perhaps, education; but circumstances and difficulties had carried him away from a continuous inspiration regarding that project. He had but a fragment of it done, and this he was determined to give out—at least, if no other way, in a ‘summary’ to be included in the *Treatise on Education*, which seemed at this moment the most complete and consummate project of his career.

CHAPTER XVI

EDUCATION

*É*MILE was a conglomeration of 'reflexions and observations' on human life, 'without order and almost without any continuity'. Rousseau meant to follow 'the course of nature' steadily, but at every step he turned to make excursions of thought on the things that came into view as he conducted his pupil Émile through life. His argument thus gathered unto itself various short essays on Language, Modes of Speech, Music, Good Taste, The Senses, The Nature of Happiness, Self-love, Man's Dependence on his Fellows, Friendship, the Love of the Sexes, Marriage, Religion, Moral Virtue, such topics as might have been discoursed upon by a Plutarch or a Seneca, or a Montaigne. Besides these essays there were three compositions obviously distinct from the main treatise, *Sophie or Woman* (the greater part of Book V), *The Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar* (inserted toward the end of Book IV), and an Abstract of *The Principles of Political Right* or *The Social Contract* (coming almost at the end of the last book).¹ For the resulting digressive character which these essays imparted to the work he made his apology in a *Preface*. But he declined to make any for disappointing those complacent readers who would see in the book only 'the reveries of a visionary', expecting something 'practicable' for them to employ without any change in the existing order. Like Plato he would not do things by halves—if the right way of education seems unsuited to the usages of present society, then it is simply up to man to change his ways of living and his institutions, until all else is right and in accord with the order of Nature. And the first change itself must be in the attitude of the fathers and mothers themselves, for it is they alone who can make these visions thoroughly practicable. It is to parents the work is dedicated.

'All is well, leaving the hands of the Author of things; all degenerates in the hands of man.' If that is the melancholy truth, what is man to do? Certainly not abandon children to themselves. A child so treated would become the most distorted of all humans, for then prejudices, authority, necessity, example, and all the common social practices would impinge upon him directly, without the shocks being absorbed or redirected by any

¹ Because of their distinct character and inspiration, these three compositions are here dealt with separately, the discourse on *Woman* in the preceding chapter relating closely to the ideas of *Julie*, and the discourses on Religion and Politics in the two following chapters.

loving care. It is the mother first who sets up the 'enclosure about the soul of her child'. Some other may be of use in marking out the circuit for her, but she alone has the right of raising the first protecting barrier against the world. But the mother in the civilised order really does not have enough respect and authority for her high task. She has little say against the customs of men, though her duties to the family are more vital and her attachments to it are generally of greater strength than those of a man.¹ And a very great deal depends on this fulfilment of the woman's part in the scheme of Nature. 'If you want to send every one to his fundamental duties, begin with the mothers; you will be astonished at the changes you will produce. . . . See that the mothers deign to nourish their own babies, and morals will be reformed of themselves, and the sentiments of nature will be awakened in all hearts; the State will repeople itself: this first point, this point alone will encompass all. The appeal of the domestic life is the best counter-poison to bad morals. All the troubles about children, which we think so importune, will become quite agreeable to us; it will make the father and the mother more necessary, more dear, the one to the other; it will draw the conjugal bond tighter between them. When the family is lively and animated, the domestic cares are the dearest occupation of the wife and the most delightful entertainment of the husband. Thus from the correction of this abuse alone there would soon result a general reform, and so, too, nature would have reclaimed her rights.'² And the thought ran now into a personal and remorseful vein, 'A father when he engenders and makes provision for children is only performing a third of his task. He owes men to the species; he owes to society, sociable men; he owes to the State, citizens. Every man who can pay that triple debt and does not do so, is culpable, and more culpable, perhaps, when he pays only half of it. He who cannot fulfil all the duties of a father has no right whatsoever to become one. There is neither poverty nor work nor fear of the judgment of men that dispenses him from the duty of providing for and raising his children himself. Reader, you can believe me on that score. I tell you now, I predict, that any one who has any heart and neglects such sacred duties will long shed bitter tears for his fault, and will never be consoled for what he has done.'³ It was his thought now to make amends with the pen. He would fancy himself in charge of the scion of a well-to-do family having

¹ *Émile*, bk. 1, H., vol. ii, pp. 3 n.-4 n.

² p. 13. I shall in general follow the sequence of Rousseau's thought and indicate by references only departures from the order of the book.

³ pp. 16-17.

at his disposal the means of carrying out a right plan of education, and being able especially to eliminate the evil influences of city households and to live in the greater freedom of the country. The child would be called 'Émile'.

At birth man is weak and helpless and without sense. By the time he is grown he must be strong enough to provide for himself and know how to support all the goods and ills of life. It is his education that is to make this difference. Education is three-fold in character, an internal development of the faculties and organs which is an education on the part of nature; the use one makes of those natural developments, the education given by men; and the experience acquired by dealing with things, which may be called the education of things. What is due to nature does not depend at all upon man, and that from the experience of things but slightly so; and yet man can spoil everything else by setting the course under his direction at odds with the courses of nature and experience. The true policy is to make all three follow a single line, and only by such harmonising will all the contradictions and misery of human life be avoided. And since the course of nature is one over which man himself has no power whatsoever, it must be taken as the criterion or pacemaker for all man's part.¹

Modern philosophy would question that opinion and pretend that what seems nature is really nothing but habit. Helvétius had recently taken such a position in his book *De l'Esprit*.² It is true, of course, that men may be forced like plants to climb by a certain fixed route, but as soon as their situation changes and the force is removed they take the unforgotten, true line of their lives, the *natural* one. Even Locke and his empirical followers virtually admitted that our human sensibility is born with us and is therefore natural, for they made sensations primary and the standard for the human understanding. Equally primary with the senses, however, are the tendencies in man to move toward or away from things affecting him, which writers like Montaigne, Descartes, and Malebranche had called 'natural inclinations'.³ It is characteristic of these active tendencies that they do not disappear as man advances from sheer sensibility to the more rational notions of utility, and further still to the reflective ideas of happiness or perfection. The 'primary dispositions' develop along with the perceptive faculties and only become the more firmly established in man's nature with time.

¹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

² Cf. D. Mornet, *L.N.H.*, vol. i, p. 109.

³ Cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, ch. 2, 'Du repentir', op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 32-3. 'Les inclinations naturelles s'aydent et fortifient par institution, mais elles ne se changent guères et surmontent'.

This indicates the point at which Rousseau differed from the empirical philosophers who thought of the natural merely as what is there in the beginning and considered that these first features are afterwards changed entirely according to external accident. He conceived of the natural as that determinate and persisting character of a being which shows not only in its origin but also in its 'natural history'. This new conception of Nature had come to the fore with Buffon whose *Natural History* he read and quoted frequently, and always with very great appreciation. Rousseau was here doing something analogous in regard to man: 'This book', he wrote, 'ought to be the history of my species.'¹ The true idea of human nature, then, is that it consists of certain dispositions of sense and action which set a course of their own. And the general plan for education is to do everything with a careful attention to this natural history.

There was a possible alternative to this principle of following nature. Man lives his life always as a member of some 'partial society', which alienates him, in a way, from humanity at large, although that is not so bad as it seems, because such a life, by concentrating his human interests, deepens them and produces very real virtues in him with reference to society—and after all, 'the essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives'. Beware then the boasting virtue of the cosmopolitan! Yet there is a real danger, too, in man's absorption with life in a political society. He is likely to consider the best social institutions to be those that 'best denature man' and make him not only live an existence relative to the community but also believe that he is nothing but a part of that whole. Now it ought not to be assumed without argument that when man is educated for society he will at the same time be educated for himself, as a man and individual—for Aristotle had suspected that the virtue of man and the virtue of the citizen might not always be one and the same. In the practice of civilisation there is often a confusion between these two distinct policies of educating man for his own good and educating him for the good of the State, which results in making the product a being who is for ever in contradiction with himself and his fellows. It is important, then, to be clear about this distinction between the two types of education, though one may hope, as Rousseau himself does, that the intelligent prosecution of either policy will certainly realise the ends of both. At the outset, however, a choice should be made between the 'public education' and the 'domestic education'. 'If you want to get a good idea of public education read the *Republic* of Plato. It is not a work on politics, as people think

¹ *Émile*, pp. 5-6, and p. 387.

who judge books only by their titles; it is the very finest treatise on education ever written. When they want to show us the land of chimeras they name the education of Plato: if Lycurgus had ever committed his to writing, I should find it very much more chimerical. Plato only tried to purify the heart of man, Lycurgus to denature it.' But there is no use now considering anything like the Platonic education—in the modern world where 'there is no true country or fatherland'. For the civilisation of to-day one must plan another type of education, a 'domestic education', or, as Rousseau preferred to call it, 'the education of nature'. To plan this education one must decipher not any ideal republic but something equally rare, 'the natural man'. And to know the man of nature thoroughly one must have observed his penchants and watched their progress and course to their fullest development.

The career of the man of nature falls into epochs, for Nature always has epochs, as had been described in the work of Buffon. The first epoch for man is the time of physical helplessness when almost everything needs to be done for him. The right policy here is to do only what is necessary for the release of the child's own activities. This applies first to the body, as the Greeks well knew, and after them, in modern times, Malebranche, Locke, and Buffon. A weak body will command the soul and never let it be free to develop; and worse still, a sickly body leads to a subservience to doctors, for what begins only as a necessity continues often from vanity. Rousseau digressed here in a tirade against the doctors for encouraging such dependence on their arts, and he pronounced hygiene the only valuable part of medicine.¹

It is assumed that the birth of the child has been entirely natural, that he starts life with a sound body, and that he is nursed by his own mother.² If it be necessary to have a wet nurse, she should herself be newly delivered so that the infant can get the first milk, which is very essential. A nurse of the peasant type is better than a city-dweller, because she is likely to eat more vegetables and less meat, which will be to the advantage of the baby.³ When the child himself takes to other food he, too, ought to have the country style of diet, without the

¹ Cf. B. Lamy, *Quatrième lettre de Théodore à Eugène* (included in *Entretiens sur les sciences*), pp. 433-4; cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 2, ch. 37, 'De la ressemblance des enfants aux pères', ch. 3, pp. 508 ff.; 'Les médecins ne se contentent point d'avoir la maladie en gouvernement; ils rendent la santé malade, pour garder qu'on ne puisse en aucune saison, échapper leur auctorité.'

² Cf. Plutarch, *On Education*, sect. 5; Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, Histoire naturelle de l'homme*, vol. ii, p. 474, 2nd edition, 1750.

³ Buffon, *ibid.*, p. 474.

high seasoning customary in cookery. Indeed, it is best for him on the whole to be in the country for the sake of fresh air and the opportunities, later, of moving about more freely and without hurt to himself or damage to costly things, for he is bound to suffer less physical harm from falling and other accidents than from the absurd constraints imposed by nurses for the sake of quiet in the city household. The body requires a daily washing—as Locke in particular had urged—so that the skin will be healthy and firm. And above all, no bands and swaddlings that restrict the movements of the baby, but loose dresses permitting activity, for it is essential both for exercise and for learning about things by contact with them.¹

But what of the mind of the infant? In the beginning he has not even the sense of his own existence.² That has to be acquired, and there is a whole order of acquisitions common to mankind before they even know how to speak and understand speech. This pre-verbal education of the mind is too easily overlooked because it is not done by instruction, or rather, because it is a kind of self-instruction, where what the teacher does is of little prominence as compared with the operations of nature and experience.

The earliest sentience is one purely affective, the perception of pleasure and pain.³ It takes a long time to form ideas of external objects when one is still lacking the power to move about and take hold of them. In such a situation a variety in the presentation is almost the only way to make it possible for a child to discriminate between objects and get some sense of their different places and relations to each other, and because of this it is advisable not to allow the baby to contract habits of expecting such and such things to appear always in the same place and time and other conditions.⁴ Once things are recognisable, however, any novelty or strangeness is appreciated and this evokes the disposition of fear, whereupon care should be taken to select the objects presented in such a way as to habituate the infant to new things and fortify him against premature fears, an early training, as it were, in the rudiments of courage. This selection of what ought to be familiarised is of advantage, too, in that it organises ideas for the memory and imagination which are then beginning to dawn. But it is mostly what the child does for himself at this time that counts. He is always

¹ Buffon, *ibid.*, pp. 457 ff.; vol. iii (1st ed., 1749), pp. 362–3. Diderot had called the looking, touching, and listening of animals an 'experimental physics'—*Pensées sur l'interprétation de la Nature*, X, vol. ii, p. 14.

² Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, pt. 1, sect. 4, ch. 2, p. 84.

³ Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 653; Condillac, *Œuvres Diverses*, vol. iii, p. 51.

⁴ Cf. Buffon, vol. iii, p. 312.

disposed to touch and handle things and learns by his movements the various sense qualities, and relates what he touches with what he sees and thus acquires the idea of extension or distance.¹ What he learns, however, he is hardly in a position to make use of, because of his helplessness, so that in general his affective states are still dominant. This first state of man is far from being that of self-sufficiency depicted in the *Discourse on Inequality*, but rather one of misery and weakness. Needs and discomforts assail him and his sole resource is the cry, the only natural language that may be said to exist, excepting possibly gesture; and the accent of this cry is as telling and effective as any words could possibly be. The cry is a call for help to which nature has made mankind responsive. What one does, therefore, in the way of response to the child's crying is of very great moment for his whole future as a man: 'From these tears, which one might think so little worthy of attention, arises the primary relationship of man with all who surround him: here there forms the first link of that long chain of which the social order is formed. When the child cries, he is ill at ease, he has some need which he does not know how to meet: we look into the matter, we seek out the need, we find it and do what is needful. When we do not find it or cannot do so, the tears continue and then we are importuned: we humour the child to make him be quiet, we rock him, sing to make him go to sleep: if he is stubborn, we get impatient and threaten him; brutal nurses sometimes slap him. There you have strange lessons for his entrance into life!' Indeed, the resentment and mad rage of an infant so treated only go to prove that the sense of justice and injustice is inborn in the heart of mankind—it is not simply the pain that arouses such temper but 'the manifest intention to hurt'. In this matter the domestics in a household may be a hundred times more dangerous and harmful to the baby than all the ills of exposure to the air or weather; for by their ill-intentioned acts they can raise up a will against their own and continually antagonise it, which has a physically debilitating effect.² Even aside from such unwisdom one must proceed with great care: 'the first tears of an infant are prayers: if one does not watch out, they will soon become orders'. For he is very helpless and soon aware of his dependence on others, and just as quickly learns how to get their attention by his crying. This is when he is likely to have the idea of wanting his own way and lording it over those

¹ Buffon, *ibid.*, p. 312. The argument derives, of course, from Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*.

² *Emile*, pp. 34–36; cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 1, ch. 2, 'De la coustume', vol. i, p. 118, 'Je treuve que nos plus grands vices prennent leur ply dez nostre plus tendre enfance, et que notre principal gouvernement est entre les mains des nourrices'.

about him. When he reaches for anything that he really knows to be beyond his power to attain and makes a loud outcry for it, he is plainly giving a command, either to the thing itself or to some person who will bring it to him. Rousseau saw here the germ of self-will and he was as determined as Plato to prevent its development as a canker in the soul. The lesson the baby must learn is that he is never to command either men or things. So if any response at all is made to such imperative demands it should only be that of leading the child himself, step by step, to what he wants, requiring some exertions on his part, to make him understand that he cannot order other beings to do his bidding. It is really from the child's great weakness that all his supposedly inherent badness comes. This suggests a general proposition: a Being who is truly All-Powerful must surely be perfectly Good. The practical conclusion for education is to see that the child is strong, and he will then be always good.

Of course, the infant is not a moral being in any sense of the word, and good and bad have no meaning when used in reference to him. Such a conception is relevant only to a person who has reason to teach him what is good and evil and who has also a conscience to love the one and turn away from the other. Though the child's actions may be good or bad in our view, they are neither one nor the other for him, although he may well become aware of the way we feel about them. Those who argue from his destructive actions to a natural wickedness and viciousness fail to realise that it is the nature of man at this phase to have a superabundance of random activity. 'He feels, so to speak, enough life to animate all that is around him.'¹ This energy causes much disturbance but very little real harm to others or to the children themselves, for the very good reason that they have too little force at their command. 'But as soon as they can consider the people around them as instruments which they in particular can set in action, they will make use thereof to follow their inclination and make up for their own feebleness. That is how they can become disagreeable, tyrannising, imperious, wicked, uncontrollable; a development that does not come from their natural spirit of domination but which actually imparts that spirit to them, for it does not take much experience to feel how pleasant it is to act by means of the hands of others, and only to have to move one's tongue to make all the universe move.' Once that spirit develops, it is never thereafter to be escaped, even though man's powers increase to a point where there is a kind of equilibrium between what he needs and what he can attain, for fancied necessities will always arise for the

¹ Cf. Buffon, vol. ii, p. 478.

satisfying of which one must have more power, and consequently indulge more and more that hateful tendency to domination over others of which Hobbes had painted 'the truly horrible picture'. To avoid any such false development these maxims must be practiced at once: let the infant himself employ all his faculties, and especially those of movement; supply his physical wants; stick to helping him in things of real not fancied necessity; and finally, study his speech and other signs so as to distinguish between his demands.¹ 'The spirit of these maxims is to grant to children more true liberty and less rule, to let them do more by themselves and to require less from others. Thus, being early accustomed to limiting their desire to their powers, they will scarcely feel the lack of what will not be in their own power.' In this connexion there is again seen the advantage of having the body and limbs free to move, for a child who is not pampered is going to cry much less and hence will be less likely to suffer the flattery of excessive attention. More harm is often done by that than by any hurts they might incur through their liberty of action. In case they do suffer hurt or pain they may very properly be distracted, provided, however, the intention to distract is not manifest to them.

Other things of importance in this earliest epoch are the eating, talking, walking of the infant. Here one must not depart from the course of nature by anticipating too much. Precocity is bad. People tend to wean children too early, instead of waiting for the natural indications, the eruption of teeth which leads instinctively to gnawing at objects. Even here, alas, a foolish departure from simplicity takes place, when babies are given silver or coral rings of great value to bite on when they would be quite content with a crust or some dried fruit. Furthermore, there is generally too great an anxiety to get them to talk.² They are in reality doing so, in their own language, from very birth. And it is far less important that they have a facility with the tongue than that they should be able to speak clearly and distinctly when they say anything. If they hear correct language in their homes, they will insensibly improve their own baby diction; but if they have nurses at hand, all attention to their whisperings, and ready to interpret their feeblest, infantile murmurings, they will never really learn

¹ Cf. Locke, *Some Thoughts on Education*, 'Wants', sect. 107: 'That which parents should take care of here, is to distinguish between the wants of fancy, and those of nature'; and 'Crying', sect. 3: 'their crying is very often a striving for mastery, and an open declaration of their insolence or obstinacy'.

² Cf. Buffon, vol. ii, p. 477. Diderot, Condillac, Helvétius likewise insisted on a slow and gradual development of man's mind. Helvétius, *De l'Esprit* (*Œuvres complètes*), vol. i, p. 7 n., 265 n.

to talk out as plainly as the country children whose voices Rousseau liked to hear outside his workroom at Montmorency, the children whose mothers had no time to be at their beck and call, but who expected plain notice from them of any genuine need. 'A pretending to be always heard is again a sort of lording-over, and the child ought not to exercise any of that whatsoever.' Another fault in teaching language too soon is that the words come to be acquired before any sense of their meaning. 'That is one of the reasons why peasants generally have a more accurate mind than the people of the city, because their vocabulary is less extensive. They have few ideas, but they compare them very well.' Finally, it is to be observed that all the above developments come about together, and very rapidly, which constitutes another argument against making any haste in the education.

The second epoch is that of boyhood. Book II starts with the child learning to walk, and doing it quite unhurried by his elders. He is no longer the infant; he is stronger and can do more for himself; he is able to speak, and consequently cries much less than before, and only when he happens to hurt himself in the course of his various activities in the out-of-doors. His life as an individual person is now beginning.

At this juncture Rousseau paused for longer reflection. Here is the child at the point where he is becoming conscious of his own existence and of his happiness or unhappiness. Too commonly people think of happiness as something all to come later; they forget that many never reach that prospective maturity. Why not see the child happy at every present moment? Why regulate everything with reference to a future happiness which may never arrive? 'The age of gaiety passes amid tears, chastisements, threats, slavery. We torment the unhappy lad for his own good. . . . Men, be human, it is your primary duty: be so for all conditions, for all ages, for all that is not foreign to man. What wisdom is there for you outside your humanity? Love childhood, encourage its games, its pleasures, its delightful instinct. Who of you has not regretted some time or other that age when laughter is always on the lips and the soul always at peace? Why do you want to take away from these little innocents the enjoyment of a time so short, that quickly escapes, and of a good so precious which they really do not know how to abuse? Why do you want to fill with bitterness and grief these first rapid years which will no more return to them than they will to you? Fathers, do you know the exact moment when death will claim your children? Prepare not for yourselves regrets at having

taken from them the few instants nature granted them to live: as soon as they can be conscious of the pleasure of existence, see that they enjoy it; make it so that at whatever hour God summons them, they shall not die without having tasted life.¹

The excuse that 'evil inclinations' must be rooted out early is none at all, for these tendencies in the child may well be only the results of such very discipline itself. But in any case people do not think out what happiness can *mean*, even for a mature man: 'We do not know what happiness or unhappiness in the absolute is. All is mixed in this life. . . .' Plato and many other wise men noted this.²

Rousseau dwelt a little longer on it, and more pessimistically, for the sufferings of men ordinarily preponderate over their enjoyments, and felicity for most people consists only in not having to suffer pain, or suffering the least amount possible of it. In any case, some suffering is inescapable. It is inseparable from the life of desire—we desire to be rid of what pains us and we desire to enjoy what is pleasing, but all the desiring, of whatever sort, means that we are deprived of something and that we feel the deprivation and are miserable, unless we have the capacity to satisfy these needs. In fact a disproportion will always exist between our desires and our powers to satisfy them. What, then, is man to do about this? To repress desires as such is to leave part of nature inactive and render life less full and enjoyable; on the other hand to try to attain the balance by extending our powers is only to raise higher expectations of what we can hope for and thus augment our desires to a still greater disproportion with our capacity to attain. The only solution then is to bring about the equilibrium by diminishing the *excess* of man's desires in relation to his *natural* capacities, and following this as a criterion. When all the powers of a man are fully in play and nothing really necessary is too much for him, then, and then only, is the soul at peace and the man himself well-organised, integral, whole, and sound. This is the life of man according to the intention of nature, 'the primitive state'. His desires are only such as are necessary to his self-preservation, and for their satisfaction he has powers just sufficient—of course, including amongst these powers those of attaching others to him and engaging them in action for his behalf. The child has such social powers which supplement the feeble capacities of his own body and mentality.³ And it is the intention of nature, too,

¹ *Émile*, p. 46.

² Plato, *Laws*, 732-3.

³ Cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 2, ch. 8, *De l'affection des pères aux enfants*. 'S'il y a quelque loi vraiment naturelle . . . je puis dire, à mon avis, qu'après le soing que chaque animal a de sa conservation et de fuyr ce qui nuit, l'affection que l'engendrant porte a son engeance tient le second lieu de ce reng'. Vol. i, p. 529.

that additional powers shall develop in man when the time comes for their use in meeting the exigencies of life, so that the equilibrium on which happiness depends is lifelong. What commonly happens in life is that man's imagination is prematurely stimulated by what goes on in his society and that it runs ahead of the other faculties and sets a new standard of what is possible, and the desires follow this exorbitant fancy, and thus man pursues a happiness that is for ever receding beyond his grasp. Most of the ordinary values of life are such values of imagination or opinion; the permanent and real ones are few and quite simple, such as strength, health, and a good conscience; while on the side of evil, apart from remorse of conscience for crime and bodily pain, all is imaginary. If man is content with what he is by nature, if he abates his pride and is not bent on bringing all the goods of the world to his feet, he is never conscious of what he lacks and of his own weakness and misery. He who is satisfied simply with living according to his nature will always live well. He troubles not over the necessity of an eventual death, and sees in that necessity only a further reason for enduring bravely what troubles life brings him. It would be a sad gift, indeed, for men as they commonly are constituted, to grant them an immortality, because it would mean no end of their frantic efforts to satisfy their cravings and the troubles they bring on themselves. 'Live according to nature, be long-suffering, chase doctors away; you will not escape death, of course, but you will be aware of it but once. . . . Suffer, die, or get well, but above all live to the last moment.'¹

But we have wandered from the vision of man as instituted by nature to man as he has made himself by human institutions, where everything is tyranny, madness, and contradiction, where men, as they approach the term of life become more feverishly anxious about it just when it has the least value to them. 'The fundamental law of resignation comes to us from nature.' But others at such a time impress on us what we are to miss; they are for ever looking ahead to a future, and their foresight, of which they boast so much as a virtue, is really the curse of civilised life. It causes misery because it extends our being to the whole world and so makes us sensitive to what is to happen over that vast surface. That externalising of oneself in things and in the opinion of others is man's own work. 'O Man, draw thy existence together into thyself, and thou wilt never more be miserable. Stay in the place nature has assigned thee in the chain of beings, nothing can possibly make thy leaving it necessary; rebel not against the hard law of necessity, and in trying to

¹ *Émile*, p. 49.

resist it, exhaust not the powers Heaven has given thee, not for the extension or prolonging of thy existence but solely for preserving it as God wills and as long as He wills. Thy liberty, thy power extend only as far as thy natural capacities, and not beyond; all the rest is nothing but slavery, illusion, prestige. Even domination itself is servile, when it depends on the opinion of others; for thou dost depend upon the prejudices of those whom thou governest by means of prejudices. To govern them as it pleases thyself, thou must govern as it pleases them. . . .’ ‘The only man who does his own will is he who has no need, in order to do it, to put the arms of another to it as well as his own; whence it follows that the first of all good things is not authority, but liberty. The man truly free only wants what he can have, and does what pleases himself. There you have my fundamental maxim.’¹ In this aspect a political society, too, doubly weakens man, because it takes from him the right to employ his own powers as he sees fit and renders them insufficient for the new needs engendered. A civilised man is really less fitted for his part than a baby, for the reason that his needs have grown so much greater than his capacity. The infant, though intrinsically feeble, enjoys a natural power in the attachment of his parents; although this, too, is only in the ideal condition, for if the affection is unwisely exercised whether by way of excess or defect of attention, the child, like the spoiled man, wants ever more than what can or ought to be supplied. It is almost inevitably so, since the parents themselves are of the civilised order. They introduce their child too soon to that world, raise up needs beyond his years and thus put him to the necessity of meeting situations before nature is ready. This makes him suffer more than he need, and long for the power to rid himself of it, a power he can only hope to have through controlling other persons: ‘he ought only to be aware of his weakness, not suffer from it; he ought to depend upon others but not obey them; he should demand but not command. He is submitted to others only because of his needs and because they see better than he what is good for him, what can make for or against his own preservation. No one has a right, not even the father, to command a child in regard to what is of no real use to him.’ The happiness of children, as of men, consists primarily in the enjoyment of their liberty to act and to learn for themselves. Even at best children can have but an ‘imperfect liberty’ analogous to that of men ‘in the state of nature’, and when they are deprived of that little they naturally become imperious and commanding themselves—and Rousseau remarked sarcastically

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-1.

and bitterly, that the great, the powerful, the princes of the world are like so many infants with all their 'puerile vanity' based only on their prowess over the wills of others, and he recommended the supremacy of law in the State as the only right and manly policy.¹

From these reflections an inference is to be drawn regarding what should be done to make a child genuinely happy. His dependence should be, as far as possible, entirely on things and their necessary order. If his indiscretions are corrected by physical obstacles produced by his own action, he will get a lesson against doing such things, and remember it. Express prohibitions are unnecessary when the negative is given in his own experience. Help that is really needed from others should be given, but never simply because he demands it. He ought to receive just enough assistance so that he can be 'free but not imperious'. Here again we have to learn to distinguish his genuine wants from fancied ones and even from those that are due to the sheer abundance of life. When refusals must be made, they should be irrevocable. Nor should polite pleading be allowed to make any difference, for the child who begs for a thing in the formulas of politeness can really be more arrogant than if he commanded outright, because he feels surer of being obeyed. It is always very difficult, of course, to strike a mean between an excess of rigor and an excess of indulgence. Allowing a boy to do everything is to expose his health and life; yet to spare him every kind of hurt, with too great solicitude, is to render him too delicate and sensitive and to prepare a future with more ills than ever. To expose a child thus to some present hurt in order that he may be strong in the future is not like the unwise foresight of discipline which has just been repudiated—the liberty the child enjoys makes up for all the trifling incommodities he may suffer. Besides, an experience of slight ills makes for an appreciation of the really great goods and a sympathy with others who may happen to suffer more than oneself. The physical hurts of boyhood never make it miserable, whereas the surest way to do so is to have the boy accustomed to obtaining everything he desires. A child who finds everything done for him comes to believe the fatal doctrine which Hobbes mistakenly attributed to the natural man, that everything in his power is his own: such a spoiled child soon believes himself the proprietor of the universe, regards all men as his slaves, and then, when meeting refusals interprets the opposition to his will as an unjust hostility, and rebels and raises a furor. 'Happy! He? Why he's a despot; he's at once the lowest of slaves and

¹ *Émile*, pp. 51-2.

the most miserable of all creatures.' If such tyrannical notions make the child wretched in his very infancy, how much worse will it be when he grows up so pampered and then meets the resistance to his self-will of those outside the home?

'Let us return to the very first rule. Nature has made children to be loved and succoured; has she then made them to be obeyed and feared?' And what an affront to nature's order is the ridiculous royal ceremony where the aged magistrate of a whole people prostrates himself in obeisance before a babbling princeling? Yet this typical performance of civil society is only symbolic of the folly in almost every household. 'What is more shocking, more contrary to the order of things, than to see a child imperious and rebellious, ordering everyone about him. . . .?'¹

Yet, on the other hand, since one in these earliest years is really in chains, by virtue simply of his weakness, it is certainly barbarous for his elders to add any further subjection. Enough servitude is in store for him without anticipating it in the home. Severity and harshness in fathers and teachers are a cruel infliction. The boy should be allowed to be happy in his 'natural liberty', while he can.

There are other aspects to consider about the fact that the child is about to become a 'moral being'. He who is never to order others must not be ordered himself, and his speech should not acquire harsh terms of 'command', 'obey', 'obligation', because he has neither use for them nor understanding of their meaning. Force, strength, necessity, lack of power, constraint, these he knows from experience and can speak about them. Hence the sheer futility of reasoning with a child about his duties, despite the great authority of Locke who encouraged such methods, and Rousseau travestied a typical dialogue of tutor and child on such lines.² He reasserted here the 'maxims' of Julie: Since children have their own ways of feeling, thinking and acting, they can be educated only by following those ways: they will never learn from talk about obedience or duty if they are not ready to appreciate such things from their own relationships with other beings; they do know others to be strong and themselves weak and a certain necessity in the way things

¹ Ibid., pp. 54-5; cf. Plato, *Laws*, 729.

² Condillac and Rousseau were in agreement here—see the former's *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, pt. i, sect. 4, ch. 2, p. 80, ed. Lenoir. Locke, op. cit., 'Reasoning', sect. 81. But Locke later says virtually the same as Rousseau in a sentence or two after the passage in view, 'But when I talk of reasoning, I do not intend any other, but such as is suited to the child's capacity and apprehension. Nobody can think a boy of three or seven years old should be argued with as a grown man. Long discourses, and philosophical reasonings, at best, amaze and confound, but do not instruct children.'

must happen, and from those experiences alone can they grow into a perception of a similar law in human relations which no amount of storming or pleading will set aside and which is therefore above them; such a necessity, the necessity of things, man always endures patiently, but never, of course, the dictates inspired by an ill will in others. Rear a child accordingly and he will learn all he needs to know for his future happiness in the world of men.

Those who teach are too impatient to rely on what the boy can learn through his own capacity and experience. They seek to spur him on by emulation, jealousy, envy, vanity, or the fear of being left out, thus starting up the invidious social passions before he is truly social in any sense, and endangering the whole of his future happiness in society. The sole instrument of value—teachers invariably fail to employ it—is ‘liberty well-regulated’. No verbal lessons, then, nor extraneous devices to stimulate learning. ‘Don’t inflict any sort of chastisement on him, for he knows not what it means to be at fault; never make him ask your pardon, for he does not know how to give offense to you. Being devoid of all morality in his actions, he cannot do anything that could be morally bad and meriting either chastisement or reprimand.’

Rousseau fancied his readers incredulous, and he reminds them that they have only ideas of the children of their experience, who could not safely be so treated. He saw, too, a lurking assumption of original sin, and countered thus: ‘Let us pose it as an incontestable maxim that the original movements of nature are always right: that there is no original perversity in the human heart; not a single vice is to be found concerning which we cannot tell both how and by what way it has entered into the heart.¹ The only passion natural in man is the love of oneself, or self-love in its widest sense. In itself, or relative to us, that self-love is useful. Since it has no necessary bearing on others, it is, in regard to them, naturally indifferent. It *becomes* good or bad only in the application we make of it and the bearings we give it. In the child, this love of oneself is still indeterminate as regards others. It is simply a concern of the natural being for its own self-preservation. A youngster might do things bad from our point of view, but ‘he could do a great deal of what is bad without evil-doing, because the bad action depends upon the intention to harm, and he will not have had

¹ *Émile*, p. 60. Cf. Locke, sect. 37: *Some Thoughts on Education*. ‘I desire to know what vice can be named, which parents, and those about children, do not season them with, and drop into them the seeds of as soon as they are capable to receive them.’

that intention'.¹ To attribute such a bad intention to him is to judge him prematurely. 'Dare I set forth here the greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of all education. It is not to gain time but to lose it. Ordinary readers, pardon me my paradoxes: one must commit them when one reflects; and whatever you may say, I would rather be a man of paradoxes than a man of prejudices. The most dangerous interval of human life is that from birth to the age of twelve years. It is the time when the errors and vices germinate, without one's having any instrument as yet for their eradication; and by the time the instrument comes the roots are so deep that there is no more chance to dig them out. . . . The primary education ought, then, to be purely negative. It consists not in giving instruction in virtue or truth but in guaranteeing the heart against vice and the mind against error. . . . Let childhood mature in children.'²

The positive education in moral goodness can be given only by example in dealing with the boy himself and with others in his surroundings. Let the immediate personal relations be exemplary and all will be well without any explicit teaching of virtue. For the boy learns from the habit of life accepted in his circle. Hence the value of spending these early years away from large cities and the multitudes of valets and domestics, and in the country where the governor has real control over the influences which will play upon his charge. The impetuous passions like wrath have a deleterious effect, and a laugh at the wrong time can spoil the work of six months. Everything must be directed so as to prevent a precocious experience in matters of morality. 'On this earth which nature would have made the first paradise of man, have a care lest you play the role of the tempter, in wanting to give innocence the knowledge of good and evil.'³

Of course, it is not possible to bring a child up to the age of twelve in any society without giving him some idea of human relationships and morality. In general one should withhold these ideas until there is some occasion when they are of use to the child himself. An example may be taken with regard to the idea of property. The first sentiments of human beings are about themselves, in consequence of their natural tendencies to self-preservation, and so it is characteristic that the first meaning of justice is not what we owe others but what they owe us. Even before this sense of right comes, there is a feeling for what is our own among things, derived perhaps from the fact that we are accustomed to dispose of certain ones according to our own will, or else that we have received the things, or lastly, and

¹ Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 861-2.

² *Émile*, pp. 60-1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

fundamentally, that we have put our time and labor, that is, ourselves, into making them what they are. In all these ways things seem our own, our property. A child can learn this by analogous experience. For example, in wanting a patch of the garden to tend, he comes to want the work on it respected, and from that he can realise, further, that he needs to respect what others have likewise put their labor into, and he may even achieve the conception of an understanding with the gardener about these matters, the first notion of a contract. By such steps one may learn the sanctity of agreements and the duty of abiding by one's word, the true principles of all social life.

Associated with this matter of keeping one's word is the question of telling the truth. Lying is a common vice of children but it can be avoided. Lies are of two sorts, one concerning past fact, the other concerning future actions to be performed, as when one promises what one does not mean to fulfil. An *Émile*, brought up according to the foregoing principles, has no motive whatsoever for lying. If he has been accustomed to his chastisement coming as the inevitable consequence of the order of things, not of what some people know or do, he will not believe it any advantage to deceive them regarding what has happened—if the facts are so, such and such consequences must ensue, independently of men. It is still more unnatural for him deliberately to engage himself with an intention not to fulfil his part. Indeed, the future has so very little meaning to children that their promises or engagements have no real validity and the making of them ought never to be insisted upon by their elders. Consequently the vice of lying, so very prevalent at this age, is due entirely to the bad methods of those in charge who make a point of exacting information from a youngster when he may not recall the facts distinctly enough to have a ready and honest answer but, on being forced to reply as a matter of obedience, will do so with inventions to suit the emergency. Further, the bad practice of requiring him to promise this and that and everything so multiplies his obligations that it cheapens them all, and inevitably results in an imperfect execution, or a forgetting, and eventually in a disdaining of all promises as essentially mere formulas to suit those who exact them.

The same consideration might be given to the many other duties that are so commonly prescribed for children and thereby made simply hateful. They are forced to church to be made pious; and, by being always made to run through their prayers, they never reach the point where they ever want to pray to God themselves. To be made charitable, they must go through the mummery of giving alms, without appreciating the

value of what is given, or knowing the real import of charity; and besides, they are never taught to give anything they actually prize themselves—witness the instructions of Locke who expressly taught that children ‘ought to be made convinced by experience that the most liberal is always the best rewarded’, which is a sure way to cultivate avarice or a usurious liberality, never a charity of the heart. In these matters, the best lesson is personal example. When children see the good spirit manifested in the actions of their superiors they will imitate the deed, and they will learn first by such imitative habits what they will afterwards do with discernment and from a genuine love of the good—a view of the progress of virtue which repeats the thought of Plato and Aristotle and Plutarch.

While moral habit is the first stage of education in morality there is one explicit lesson which is suitable to childhood, and indeed to man in any state: ‘never to do ill to any one’. This was the lesson everywhere taught by Socrates and nowhere more emphatically than in the *Republic*, when it was concluded against the sophist that it is never right to harm any one. Lacking this primary rule of behavior even the precept to do good may be defective, for every one, good or bad, does whatever he does with a view to the good as he conceives it. ‘Doing good’ must be subject then to this more fundamental maxim, of not doing evil or harm to any human person. In an aside, Rousseau dwelt longer on this point to say that the most sublime virtues are negative, and also the most difficult, because they are without ostentation. And he added that it is indeed only the solitary who can be perfectly good, notwithstanding the sentence pronounced by ‘an illustrious author, “that only the bad are solitary”’. Even for mere children a ‘solitary education’ in retreat is to be recommended, because ‘it gives childhood the time to mature’.¹

As in the *Plan* sketched in *Julie*, the intellectual has been postponed to the moral training. Such was the order of education in antiquity. Under a régime of this sort men were reared like Cato who showed no brilliance in youth, and indeed actually appeared stupid compared with his contemporaries, yet ‘that excellent head matured in silence. Suddenly he showed himself the philosopher. . . .’ That is a warning to respect childhood, and to be in no hurry to judge of its genius or lack of genius, but ‘to let nature work a long time before interfering yourself to act in her place, for fear of running counter to her operations’. Of course, some people will worry because their children seem to be getting nowhere these early years—‘What!

¹ *Emile*, p. 73, and note.

Is it nothing to be happy? Is it nothing to jump, play, run the live-long day? Why, in all his life he will never be so much occupied! Plato, in his *Republic*, whom people think so austere, does nothing else but raise the children by fetes, games, songs, recreations. . . .¹

Infancy, in truth, is 'the sleep of reason'. Yet it is customary to set about very early teaching of the mind. Advantage is taken of 'the apparent facility at learning' of children at this age. People fail to check up on what is retained or actually appropriated from such teaching. Words may be easily learned, but not the ideas; things heard, but not really understood.² For the child's knowledge is altogether wrapped up in 'sensation'. The judgment, which makes comparisons of the various things coming to his awareness, is still inactive, and no veritable memory can be said to exist when ideas, as distinct from sensations, have not yet been achieved. Children reason very well about the things they really know, the things relative to their present, felt interests, but we are very much mistaken about the nature and range of their knowledge, largely because we find them using so easily the language of our own knowledge. Hence most studies inflicted on them so early are futile, an example being foreign languages. It does not seem possible for a child really to learn two languages at once: 'minds are formed on languages; thoughts take the color of the idioms. It is only reason that is common to them, the spirit of each language having its peculiar form, a difference which could well be partly the cause and partly the effect of the national characters.' A child must first be allowed to develop *one* mind, through his native tongue, before he is put to acquiring an alien experience and way of thinking. He is to be a member of a particular nation before that of the whole world. In point of fact what actually happens is that the language he constantly uses *is* his real language, the others remaining external until after the advent of reason when he becomes able to conceive of a single meaning or idea in two or more different expressions. The ineptitude of a child in the matter of foreign language is betrayed by the recourse of teachers to the study of 'the dead languages', where the child is not expected to use the language and express himself through it but only to imitate what has been written in books.³ However, the general objection to early study is this, 'that without the idea of the things represented the representative signs mean nothing at all.'

¹ *Émile*, p. 75.

² Cf. Locke, op. cit., 'Rules', sect. 64.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-8; cf. Locke, op. cit., 'Learning', sect. 147; 'When I consider what ado is made about a little Latin and Greek. . . .'

For like reasons the study of history must be abandoned. History appears, of course, to be nothing but facts. But the facts in question are precisely such as are beyond the comprehension of one so young, since they pertain to the moral relations of men. In this connection Rousseau reported an incident at one of the houses he had visited where a child told the visitors assembled an heroic episode about Alexander, and whilst all the party were discussing their various judgments of the heroic character, the child was found to have decided as he did merely because the particular action of Alexander resembled his own taking of distasteful medicine, something which he could understand.

Away with all book lessons then, and let the youngster learn for himself, in activity about his own neighborhood. All the educator can do for him is to make some selection of the objects with which he will get acquainted and take care to present those of importance constantly, so that he will then acquire 'a magazine of knowledge which will serve his education during his youth and his conduct at all times'. No learning by heart, either, not even the fables of La Fontaine. 'Fables can instruct grown men; but one must tell the truth to children.' Covering it with a veil is to make them regard the cover itself as the interesting thing.¹ In fables it is the tricky, lying, flattering animals that fascinate, whereas the moral itself is either not seen at all or else forgotten—just as the elders depart from the theatre with passions aroused and the lesson of reason a bare intellectual thing of no influence. If the child learns anything by memorising his catechism it is only a morality of words, for he will have imbibed a more interesting and contrary code from the fables. In abolishing all such book-learning and memorising, one can do much for moral integrity, therefore, as well as lifting a curse from the lives of young children.

The first truth to bear in mind for their right instruction is this: 'They can learn nothing of which they do not feel the actual and present advantage, be it in the way of agreeableness or utility.'² As a matter of fact they quickly find it worth while to acquire the ability to speak to people not actually present and to hear from them, by the means of communication through reading and writing, and they will take these up of their own accord. So it is not necessary to make them write and read. Here again the one thing that can certainly be counted upon is almost never trusted, their natural 'desire to

¹ This is in opposition to Locke, *op. cit.*, 'Reading', sect. 156.

² *Émile*, p. 85; cf. Locke, *op. cit.*, sect. 74: 'they should seldom be put about doing even those things you have got an inclination in them to, but when they have a mind and disposition to it.'

learn'.¹ All methods should be subsidiary to that motive of their present interest. So if one notes what immediately affects them, one finds that they prove themselves quite capable of all the perception, memory, and reasoning one could possibly desire. The chief concern of the governor ought to be that the child shall be sufficiently robust in body to be able to indulge in plenty of activity, which is the condition of experience and discovery and understanding. Such a physical development will not mean a stupefying of the mind. There are two different types of people which show the possibilities of life with continual bodily exercise, the peasant and the savage. The former does everything by routine and is bound by tradition and authority, and his mind is crude, slow, and stupid; the savage is very different, for, having no fixed place, no presented task, no obedience to render, no law but his own will, he is 'forced to reason at every action of his life', with the result that the more active he is, the brighter is his mind, and the subtler his perceptions. Émile is to be given a training in the same kind of self-sufficiency, but suitable, of course, to his condition in civil society. Being put on his own resources he will be 'forced to observe' things and their effects, acquire a considerable experience, and derive his lessons from nature, not from men. He will act always according to his own views and gain thereby a judgment of his own. He will unite in himself 'what almost all the great men have had, strength of body and that of soul, the reason of a sage and the vigor of an athlete'. Of course, it is hard to conduct this kind of education. The governor is taxed to the limit, especially on the score of letting the child have his liberty and securing the discipline of nature and things. During all this period, then, one must have faith in one's vision of the 'natural course of the human heart' and patiently study the individual. And Rousseau gave an account of his own struggles and failure as a tutor working under very unfair conditions.²

The argument returns to the role of bodily action in the development of the mind. 'The primary natural activities of man being, then, to measure himself with everything that surrounds him and to experience in every object all the sensible qualities that have any relationship to himself, his first study is a sort of experimental physics relative to his own preservation.³ As all that enters the human understanding comes there by

¹ Cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 3, ch. 13, *De l'Expérience* (opening sentence). 'Il n'est desir plus naturel que le desir de cognoissance. Nous essayons tous les moyens qui nous y peuvent mener; quand la raison nous fault, nous y employons l'experience.'

² *Émile*, pp. 90 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95; cf. Diderot, on 'experimental physics', *Pensées sur l'interprétation*, &c., No. 10; vol. ii, p. 14.

way of the senses, the primary reason of man is properly called a "sensitive" reason; it is what serves as the basis for the intellectual reason: our first masters of philosophy are our feet, our hands, our eyes. To substitute books for all those is not to teach us to reason: it is to teach us to avail ourselves of the reason of others; it is to teach us to believe a great deal, but never *know* anything.' From this it is deduced that the body should be free to engage in such activities, garments loose, colors gay and not sad, no headgear for any season, no overdressing, all common faults. These recommendations other writers, too, had made, for various reasons given, notably Montaigne, Locke, Rollin, Fleuri, de Crouzas, and Buffon. Other physical considerations follow, that eating and drinking should be at the demand of the organism, that sleep should be plenty, as required for a life of much activity, though the period not to be so habitual but that the hours of retiring and rising cannot be changed, for later civil life will require such adaptability, nor ought any particular bed, especially a soft one, be necessary. In all youthful activities a 'natural gaiety' can be counted upon and a certain resistance to pains and ills of all sorts. Under certain conditions, to be sure, one must particularly fortify the child, as in the case of danger from small-pox (the question of vaccination being then much mooted). In general, however, 'the man of nature is always prepared'. And Rousseau's fancy ran high. 'If one could teach him to fly in the air, I would make of him an eagle; I would make of him a salamander, if he could be hardened to fire.'¹ It is certain, however, that *Émile* is to learn to swim.

Besides the external movements of the body are other physical actions such as those of the senses. These are the first of man's faculties to gain perfection. To accomplish one's mechanical ends it is soon discoverable that one does better by first measuring, counting, weighing and comparing the things to be dealt with by one's strength. This sizing up of things trains the various senses. Games played at night in the country develop the senses in new, unaccustomed ways, and serve also to allay, by habituation to the dark and to unusual aspects of things, the fears of man. This had been suggested by Buffon, who had also written an eloquent passage on the spring-time of life which recalled to Rousseau an experience of his own youth at the house of his guardian Lambergier, the incident recalled confirming the psychological interpretation of fear given by Buffon.² Moreover, in such unusual conditions more of the possibilities of the sense

¹ *Émile*, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 103 ff., and note citing Buffon, vol. iii, p. 319.

of touch might be realised, because the dominating influence of vision is eliminated, for 'the judgments of touch are more certain, precisely because they are more limited', and can rectify the errors of the more versatile vision. More than any other sense it is directly of value to our self-preservation, conveying the direct impression of foreign bodies on our own. Why may not this faculty be cultivated to aid hearing to a certain extent as well as sight, so that if one practiced judging sounds by their vibrations, 'one could speak to the deaf in music?'¹ It is well to recognise, moreover, that the sense of touch is valuable in the arts. Thus the playing of the clavecin is preferable to that of the 'cello because it cultivates 'a touch'. In order to avail oneself to the full capacity of the sense of touch, however, one ought not to be for ever shielding the body from exposure and thus excluding the sensation of outer objects. Being able to go barefoot is a good thing, instead of covering the feet with horse-hide. 'Roused up at midnight in the heart of winter by the enemy in their city, the Genevans found their guns before their shoes. If none of them had known how to go barefoot, who knows but that Geneva might not have been captured?' 'Let us arm man at all times for unforeseen emergencies.'

Vision extends one's operations in reference to the things round about him. Yet, because it can do so much, it is also the most faulty of the senses. However, its very illusions are necessary, particularly those of perspective which enable us to know extension and space, and compare their parts. The eye by itself cannot distinguish between size and distance, since both are judged by the same measure, the angle formed by the object with reference to the eye, and here one must supplement vision by touch and the sense of movement. Émile's education in these matters is to come about through various devices and amusements, but above all by the art of drawing, 'which renders the eye accurate and the hand flexible'. Being imitative the child wants to draw, and he needs no other master than the objects themselves that interest him, for the idea here is 'not so much that he will know how to imitate the objects as become acquainted with them'. It is to be expected, then, that there will be much mere scribbling and need of correction. The governor can do the latter by trying his own hand at the same sketch and showing the result for comparison. The interest in the art can be sustained by finding uses for the drawings, as decorations for the boy's room. By such exhibiting of them, too,

¹ *Émile*, pp. 108-9; cf. Malebranche, *Recherche* (bk. 1, ch. 6), who expressed a great love of music. Diderot had been specially interested in the blind and deaf; see his *Lettre sur les aveugles*, and *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*.

the youthful artist is likely to become his own critic, as regards both exactitude and aesthetic pleasure. Further, it is in connection with such work that the beginnings of geometry are properly made. This science is comprehensible to children when it comes their own way or when they need to find the relation of figures by themselves. 'For my pupil, geometry is simply the art of making good use of the compass and rule. . . .'¹

An objection occurs, that in thus putting so much stress on the bodily capacities and activities, the educator is violating his own principle of avoiding 'premature culture'. But there is a difference between cultivating the body and the mind. What comes from such exercising of the physical nature is a genuine competence helpful to further development, and not illusory like the pretended accomplishments of the mind at this stage. 'Moreover, one ought always to think that all this is, or ought to be, only play, an easy and voluntary direction of activities which nature demands of them, a way of varying their amusements in order to make them more pleasurable, without the least constraint turning them into work. . . .'²

The same principle applies to the exercise of the other senses. As a lover of music Rousseau could not resist a little essay on the distinctions that ought to be appreciated. 'Man has three sorts of voices, that is, the speaking or articulate voice, the singing or melodious voice, and the voice of feeling or accent which serves as the language of the passions and which animates song and speech. . . . A perfect music is that which best unites these three voices.' The child must learn first simple speaking, then singing, and only very late the expression of emotion. Throughout he should learn music by ear, not by eye, and not be subjected to the difficult methods of teaching music in vogue at that time in France.³

The senses of taste and smell in man have to do with choosing his food. They ought not to be ignored in considering his education. Certain tastes are natural to one, yet habit quickly becomes second nature which in civil society takes the place of original appetite. As far as possible one does best to follow the clues of nature in what one accustoms a child to eating. The first aliment is milk, and only by degrees are things of a pronounced savour taken, although the practice in society is to feed children the same food as adults, as if their mode of life did not require a different regimen. It is also a common practice to induce them to do things by tempting them with food. Now 'greediness is the passion of children'. It is natural, and

¹ *Émile*, pp. 114-17; cf. Malebranche, op. cit., bk. 1, ch. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 119; cf. Plato, *Laws*, 793-4.

³ *Émile*, pp. 120 ff.

there is no harm in satisfying it because the body in full exercise needs a great deal; but it is certainly not the thing to excite or tempt the appetites farther. The native likes of a child are vegetable nutriment, milk foods, baked foods, fruits, the taste for all which it is a pity to 'denature' by starting them on savory meats. If nature is followed this way, no fear need be entertained of the child's eating more than he can stand.¹

Lastly, after odor which is 'the sense of the imagination', comes the 'sixth sense called common sense'. It is a distinct faculty which develops from the rightly ordered usage of all the primary senses. It has no external organ, only the brain itself. Its perceptions are not simply sensations but ideas. The number of these ideas is the measure of the range of our knowledge; their clearness and precision, of the exactitude of the mind. It is the art of comparing them amongst themselves that we call human reason. And this reason in its first or childlike form is a 'sensitive reason', and it consists in forming simple ideas from the concurrence in one's experience of many different sensations.² This induction is entirely prior to the intellectual reason of man, the faculty whereby he compares the simple ideas and reaches to complex and general conceptions.

Émile is at the season of life when his reason is just about to dawn. One's imagination is always touched by spring. The sight of things seen in the ascendent renews the very spirit of man himself, whereas autumn, the season of maturity, only savors of decline and the term of life—"the image of death makes all things ugly". But a boy of ten or twelve years, healthy, vigorous, well-formed for his age, lively, spirited, full of life, is a vision of spring-time promise. One's thought runs on ahead, rejoicing at the prospect of this creature extending his powers and his mind toward perfection.

'The clock strikes, what a change. At the instant his eye grows duller, his gaiety goes; good-bye to joy, good-bye to the wild games. A severe and angry man takes him by the hand, says gravely to him, "Come along, Sir", and leads him out. In the chamber where they are to enter I spy books. Books! What a melancholy furnishing for his age! The poor child lets himself be dragged along, turning a look of regret upon all that surrounds him; he is silent, and goes, his eyes swollen with tears which he does not dare shed, and his heart full of sighs to which he may not give vent.³ That, however, is not our Émile. He is

¹ *Émile*, pp. 122 ff.

² There is a suggestion of both Aristotle and Leibniz in this theory of perception.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

to retain the perfections of his youth, his liberty, moral innocence, playfulness, good sense and judgment. But it almost demands clairvoyance to see how that can be in the years to come.'

The third state of childhood opens, a very brief period approaching adolescence when the boy's growth is so rapid that his energies are greater than his needs. For the most violent of them has not yet made itself felt, his imagination being still dormant. No fancied wants trouble him. 'It is the most precious time of his life, a time which comes but once; a time very short, and all the more so, as one will see in what follows, because it is important to use it well. . . . Here is the time for doing work, for instruction, for study: and mark you well, it is not I who arbitrarily make that choice, it is Nature's own indication.' For close upon the development of the body comes the activity of the mind as it craves instruction. The educator must now make haste to keep pace with Nature. 'The peaceable age of intelligence is short.'¹

Human intelligence cannot attain to all possible truth. A choice must be made, therefore, of what is to be taught and the right time to teach it. It is necessary to decide what is worth while knowing at this time of life.

All that has to do with the moral relationships of men must still be excluded, because the youth is without experience, and therefore without any ideas of such matters. This leaves only a knowledge of things and their existence. But that is task enough. 'Darknesses of the human understanding, what bold hand will dare touch your veil?'² The study of geometry is, of course, to be continued, and the aesthetic interest as well as utility may further it. But natural curiosity is now more potent than ever. The attention of the child, being taken less with the struggle for preservation amongst surrounding things is more free to scan the heavens and the remoter parts of earth. It is almost an instinct to seek out the truth concerning the world around and above us, as may be seen in the savage peoples whose whole philosophy seems occupied with the lay-out of the world and worship of the sun. 'Make your pupil attentive to the phenomena of nature, you will soon have him curious; but, in order to feed his curiosity, don't be in a hurry to satisfy it. Put the questions within reach, and let him resolve them himself.'

An example. 'Some fine evening we go out walking in a place favorable for observation, where the horizon clearly defined permits us to see in full view the setting sun, and we draw attention to the objects which will make the place of its setting recognisable. The next morning, to get fresh air, we return to the

¹ Ibid., p. 136 and p. 142.

² Ibid., p. 137.

same place before sunrise. We see it heralding itself from afar by the lines of fire it shoots before it. The flame increases, the whole East soon appears in flames: at that outburst we wait long before the great star itself shows: at every moment we think we see it appear: at last, there it is. A brilliant point goes up like a light, and immediately fills the whole of space; the veil of shadows goes out and falls. Man recognises the place of his sojourn and finds it lovely. The verdure has taken on a new vigor during the night; the dawning day which lights it up, the first rays that gild it, reveal it covered with a brilliant web of dew which reflects the light and the colors into the eye. The birds join in a choir to salute in concert the father of life; at that moment not one is silent; their twittering, still weak, is more slow and more gentle than in the rest of the day, it has the sense of the languor of a peaceable reawakening. The concurrence of all these objects brings to the senses an impression of freshness which seems to penetrate to the soul itself. It is a half-hour of enchantment which no man can resist: a spectacle so great, so lovely, so delicious, leaves no one unaffected.'¹

But are we to poetise about this scene to the child? Or explain? No, let him examine it for himself and take what impression he will. One needs only to draw attention to an observation he can easily make himself, that the sun has risen in a different place from that of its setting. He will be able to work it out for himself without being expressly told of the sphericity of the earth, that as the sun moves from east to west in the daytime, so when it is dark, an analogous motion takes place on the other side whereby it reaches the east for every rising.² By slow degrees the shape and course of the earth and sun may thus be learned. Then another experiment may be made, a sunrise observed in summer, noting the landmarks, and another from the same vantage point, in winter, whereby the child is brought to observe the difference of places, 'an east of summer' and 'an east of winter', and so begins another lesson in cosmology, learning eventually, the relative motions of earth and sun. Any recourse to instruments for representing these relative motions and sizes is not recommended. Too often the representation absorbs the whole attention of a child so that what is signified is itself forgotten. Besides it is an objection to these devices that the earth model must be made so small that the child cannot realise it to be his own terrestrial world.

¹ *Émile*, pp. 138-9.

² Rousseau had worked these things out for himself in youth (1738) and answered an article in the *Mercur de France*, 'Si le monde que nous habitons est une sphère', see H., vol. xii, pp. 304-9.

In the matter of geography the first points of interest to identify and relate to each other are the town where the boy lives and the country house, and after those two all the intervening features of the landscape. He will be interested in placing them on a map of his own drawing, and what is important here is not the exactitude in the topography but knowing how to instruct himself by it. In these maps, too, will be found more ornaments for his own room.

The knowledge that would thus be acquired concerning the heavens and earth is not very extensive, but it is all thoroughly understood and clear in the pupil's mind. He is not full of pretended knowledge and errors. Yet something more must still be done by way of giving him the love of science and methods of learning it. Heretofore he has learned things casually, upon need and curiosity; but now he is to do something consistently and to keep at learning, that is, really acquiring *science*, and not simply detached bits of knowledge. His curiosity is to be sustained both by the pleasure of satisfying it and by the continual desire to learn more. This imparts substance to the small stock of knowledge and produces an order in it of greater value than any philosopher's theoretic chain of truths. Rousseau could hardly keep himself from illustrating, at inordinate length, this natural linkage of truth by the experimental method, for he had once taught himself geometry, astronomy, and geography and made his own instruments for experimenting, in the days of his youthful passion for learning, at Les Charmettes. He went on to mention a few other interesting matters to observe, such as the phenomena of magnetism and hydrostatics. For experiments one ought to make one's own machines, not from prescriptions given in advance but by working them out, bit by bit, as means of supplementing a discoverably insufficient experience. What one learns thus by oneself, and by such slow and laborious methods, is the clearest and most certain knowledge one ever has: 'Instead of tying a child to his books, if I keep him busy in a workshop, his hands will work for the benefit of his mind: he will become a philosopher, and think he is only being an artisan.'¹ All this hard-won knowledge will actually amount to a complete science if the experiments are connected up with each other to form some order.

In the course of learning what is deemed worth while for his own well-being, the child himself also acquires some idea of utility, that is, of things which are good independently of any immediately felt need to be satisfied. He must now be more carefully handled, and with some sense of what he himself is

¹ *Emile*, p. 148.

likely to believe useful. He is never to be told to take any one's word on that score, for doing that will deprive him of his own good sense. A docile child becomes a man utterly credulous and the dupe of what others tell them. Let him, then, be accustomed to the question from others: 'What is that good for?' He will then ask it himself, on occasions when he cannot see why a thing must be done or learned. Here is a most critical juncture. The tutor may not always be able to show the utility in a form that is understandable to his pupil. If he tries to induce him to accept it with reasons that are not reasons for himself, he loses the confidence of the youngster. The part of wisdom in such cases is simply to admit that one cannot answer, and drop the proposal until such time as it can be justified. If in the first example *Émile* had been disposed to challenge the value of astronomy, the way to convince him would be to wait until he happened to need some such knowledge, as in case he were lost in the forest of Montmorency. And similar occasions can be found to make chemistry interesting. 'I don't like explanations in discourse: young folks pay too little attention to them and scarcely ever retain them. The things! the things! the things themselves, I can never repeat enough that we put too much trust in words, with our babbling education which makes nothing but babblers.'¹

'I hate books; they only teach one to talk of things one knows nothing about.'² However, one book is supremely fine, and that is the story of Robinson Crusoe on his island, reliant on his own arts and devices, and sufficient to himself. A child of this age may properly indulge himself in such castles in Spain.

The boy who steeps himself in that romance comes to see how the arts of industry require more than one pair of hands, for even Crusoe had his man Friday. In this connection the 'mutual dependence of men' dawns on him. He is somewhat prepared for this realisation, of course, by his experience in the workshop with his own governor as a companion. But now that he finds the relationship of dependence outside himself he must be safeguarded against the prejudices and false notions of the world at large which values work inversely in proportion to its real human utility and teaches the baleful maxim that 'the greatest instrument of man is man, and the wisest one is he who best makes use of that instrument'.³ True wisdom, on the contrary, teaches that man is never to be treated as an instrument to serve the purposes of others, and that the work of highest value is whatsoever is most useful, not to the few, but to mankind generally, work such as agriculture, iron and woodworking, and

¹ *Émile*, p. 151.

² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

so on. The preparation for this truer judgment has all been made in the life of Émile, and particularly in his own experience as a little gardener with his plot of ground, which is respected on condition of his showing a like respect for the work of others. From his ideas of the value of property he can advance to the notion of exchanging something of his own for what he needs from others, and thence to the ideas of some common measure of fair exchange, money, and thence, too, to some conceptions of law and government in human transactions. Then it is possible to divulge to him the fine idea of society as formed in a veritable republic, bringing home the lessons of Plato: 'Let us suppose ten men each one of whom has ten kinds of needs. It is necessary that every one, for his own needs, busy himself with ten kinds of work; but in view of the differences of genius and talent, one will be more successful at some one of these kinds of work, another at some other. If all of them are fit to do diverse things and, nevertheless, all do the same thing, all will be badly provided for. Let us now form a society of these ten men, and let each get to work, both for himself and for the nine others at the kind of occupation which best suits him: each one will profit by the talents of the others just as if he alone had all of them; each one will improve his own by the continual exercising of it: and the result will be that all the ten, perfectly well provided for themselves, will still have a superfluity for the others. That is the apparent principle of all our institutions. . . . Thus there can form little by little in the mind of a child ideas of social relations, even before he could be really an active member of society.'¹

The actualities are far otherwise. This melancholy fact is not now to be presented to the youthful Émile, the story of the *Discourse on Inequality*. But Rousseau could not forbear from telling his readers, the parents of children on whom they were setting their hearts, that Europe seemed 'headed for a state of crisis and a century of revolutions'. It is folly, therefore, to bring up a child for one definite, and supposedly secure, place in society, unmindful of such radical changes of fortune. Every one ought to be prepared for any exigency of life, and the best general preparation is to know a trade and be able to work with one's hands. In such crises all that any human being has is simply himself, not his inheritance or social connections or any other external aid, though these seem to be the only things people value. There was, however, a stupid prejudice in force against the manual trades.² Even Locke's ideal 'young gentleman' was only a compromise, a mere dabbler, so far as the

¹ Ibid., p. 164.

² Cf. Locke, *Recreations*, sect. 205.

recognition of any real competence was concerned. The highest ideal in vogue was to be a musician, an actor, or a writer of books. The sagacious Abbé de St. Pierre stood almost alone in realising the importance of mechanical competence in the life of every boy, and that this worker's apprenticeship is an essential part of the longer apprenticeship to life itself. And Rousseau appealed to the mothers, of whom he was thinking in connection with this insecurity of Europe, to guard against those many false values of the age and particularly to rear their sons away from Paris.¹

'If I have made myself intelligible so far, we can conceive how, with the habit of exercising the body and working with the hands, I impart to my pupil insensibly the love of reflection and meditation, as a counterbalance to the laziness which might result from his indifference to the judgments of men and from the calmness of his passions. It is necessary that he shall work like a peasant and think like a philosopher, in order not to be as do-nothing as a savage. The great secret of education is to bring it about that the exercise of the body and that of the mind always serve as a respite the one to the other.'²

The boy is about to cease being a child, and ready to become an individual. He has attained to the state of an active and thinking being, but still awaits the developing of his affections and sensibility which will in turn make his reason develop. For he has in this present epoch just barely achieved the power to think simple ideas by comparison of the various sensations brought to his mind through the distinct senses. That comparison is an elementary act of judgment. The manner in which this judging capacity has been allowed to operate is important for the future acts of reason in its full and complete sense. As Malebranche had taught, this active judgment is present in the simplest perception and is a primary character of mind. This putting data together to mean something is a kind of induction very often 'precipitate' and conducive to error, unless we are careful to follow our lights and guard against the vanity of knowing.³ The first thought, perhaps, is that we ought not to judge at all, until some need of experience requires it. Yet this is no solution, because Émile is 'a savage who is to dwell in cities' and who will consequently have a larger range of wants and curiosity to be satisfied. The policy is not to stifle all judgment but to teach him to judge well and make his induction from a clear and ample experience.

All that is on the long and hard path of science which has

¹ *Émile*, pp. 165-74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

³ Malebranche, *op. cit.*, bk. 1, pt. 1, ch. 14; bk. 3, chs. 9-10.

now been only started. At this juncture *Émile* has little knowledge, but he knows that well and not by halves. He has, however, a universal mind in the sense that he has a 'faculty for acquiring all knowledge; an open mind, intelligent, ready for everything, and, as Montaigne says, if not instructed, at least instructible'. His is a natural or physical knowledge, and, as Malebranche has discerned, a knowledge of things not as they are in themselves or in the absolute, but as they are related to his own body and its preservation. He has yet to understand Nature in the purely disinterested way; and beyond Nature lies the still harder world of human society, as yet unknown to him. Though *Émile* is not wise beyond himself and his interests, still he is not concentrated in himself, for he has little, if any, self-love—and to get so far without that blight is, indeed, to be successfully educated.

Man is born again, as it were, at adolescence, emerging from the mere existence of a child into the life of a man. For a person may be said to live only in so far as he enjoys that sense of his own existence which comes with the attachments of sex and friendship. This is the time when the various sentiments naturally develop, the social feelings about others and oneself, and the moral and religious consciousness. Here it becomes true, in a sense, that 'nothing human is foreign to him.'¹

'As the roaring of the sea forewarns of the tempest afar, so that stormy revolution announces itself in the murmuring of rising passions; an undefined ferment warns of the approach of danger. A change of temper, frequent excitements, a continual agitation of the mind, these render the child almost incapable of discipline. He becomes deaf to the voice that before made him docile; there is a lion in his fever; he will not recognise his guide, he does not want to be governed any more.'² And all the previous labors of the educator now seem child's play.

Yet there must be governance, and more at this crisis than at any previous time. The method employed depends upon our understanding of certain fundamentals about human nature and life. First of all it is utterly futile to attempt to destroy the passions of man, since they are the chief instrumentalities of self-preservation. It would be foolish also to try to prevent their rise, although that might seem to be the plan of this education which has aimed all along at not eliciting the social feelings. Such an inference, however, would be to misunderstand the plan. The idea throughout this course of education has been that certain dispositions are primary or natural, and that these

¹ *Émile*, p. 182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

inevitably arise under certain circumstances in every career, but that ordinarily many things in the world of man's own making arouse these susceptibilities prematurely, and give them a precocious development which is fatal to their proper functioning at the right time. So it happens that the passions of a civilised man only too often make of him a weakling and slave, whereas God intended them to make him strong and free. All emotions and passions are originally derived from a fundamental instinct or passion for preserving oneself in existence, which is to be called a 'love of oneself'. 'The love of oneself is always good, and always in conformity to order.' For it is not in the least what we mean by the selfish passion in a derogatory sense. In fact, this primordial passion very naturally includes or takes the form of a love of whatever conduces to one's preservation, as may be seen in the attachment of babies to their nurses. Of course, this is only instinct, but it quickly turns into a definite sentiment of affection as soon as the child is able to perceive the intentions of others to help him. When right care is given, therefore, an attitude of good will toward others is entirely to be expected. But if there is unwise or unkind response to his true needs, the child comes to demand more and more attention, to rebel at denials, to develop a passion for being served at his own pleasure, regardless of necessities or of others, and then it is that ill-will and self-will appear as the fruit of bad treatment. The boy is then headed for a manhood where he invariably expects every one else to take him at his own valuation and makes life miserable for all who do not defer every moment to his will. The childhood of *Émile* has been planned to avoid such germs of self-love.¹

The danger, however, is not yet completely avoided, because adolescence itself brings new trials. The instinct of sex is at first indeterminate, being simply the yearning of one for another. But soon consciousness counts, and makes choices and preferences. This implies judgment on the worth of the persons to whom one is attached—and, incidentally, it is a mistake to call love blind in the sense of blind passion without any morality of its own: 'They have made Love blind because He has better eyes than ourselves and sees relationships which we cannot perceive. To him who has no idea of merit or of beauty every woman is equally good, and the first-comer the most lovable. So far from love's coming direct from nature, the truth is that love is the rule and the control of nature's tendencies: it is by love that, with the exception of the beloved one, sex in another means nothing.' But love demands requital. One desires one-

¹ *Émile*, pp. 183-4.

self to be preferred by the beloved to all others, and so one begins to measure oneself against others, which leads to emulation, rivalry, jealousy. Even without those tendencies the lover wants friends and naturally expects them to agree with him and with the preference accorded him, which is not always possible, so that within the circle of friendship itself there may easily arise disagreements, enmities, and even hatred. Then the well-balanced 'love of oneself' becomes an exclusive self-love and actually debars the love of others. Yet it is not by nature that man thus falls into the passions of hatred of others and self-love. Rousseau felt that his contemporaries were too prone to see physical causes for everything and, in this case, to attribute the derangement intrinsically to sex. Once more, the real source of the trouble is moral, what man has done without regard to the order of nature. 'The instructions of nature are tardy and slow; those of men are almost always premature. In the first case, the senses awaken the imagination; in the second, the imagination arouses the senses, it gives them a precocious activity which cannot fail to enervate, first to enfeeble the individuals, then even the species, in the long run.' 'One must have lived in the midst of rough and simple people to know how long a happy ignorance in children can be prolonged. It is a sight at once touching and amusing to see the two sexes there left to the security of their own hearts, prolonging into the flower of age and of beauty the naïve games of childhood, and showing by their very familiarity the purity of their pleasure. When at length that lovable youth is to marry, the two give each other mutually the first of their own persons, and are dearer to each other on that account; many children, healthy and robust, become the pledge of a union which nothing can alter, and are the fruit of the wisdom of their earliest years.'¹ It is for this *Émile* is destined.

In the natural order the consciousness of sex comes slowly and by degrees, while the body gains in vigor and consistency. But here is a point of practice: what shall children be told about sex? Shall they be fully enlightened or put off with modest deceptions? This is not the right choice to offer. There is always some occasion for a child's curiosity in these matters, and the thing is to give an answer with reference to it rather than to impart knowledge which the young questioner is not ready to understand. When an intelligible question is put, he must never be deceived, but answered, and 'with the greatest simplicity, without mystery, without embarrassment, without smiling. There is much less danger in satisfying the curiosity of the child

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-7.

than in exciting it.' Too refined or round-about language hints at mystery. The using of coarse terms in an explanation is of no consequence—the things to avoid are suggestive ideas. Lessons of personal propriety can all be taught along with those of simple decency which the child can naturally appreciate.¹ For the preserving of his innocence the most important thing is that all about him shall respect and love it. When this social milieu is right, all the difficult questions can be answered. And this sentiment amongst his familiars will be a steadying influence upon him when his imagination is aroused by what he reads in books or gathers from servants and others with whom he comes into contact.

The working of this domestic education upon an adolescent youth who is coming more and more into relations with others is thus to offset the influences of the world. Compared with what happens in civil society this education is retarding, but not when compared with nature. 'If you want to put order and rule in the rising passions, enlarge the space during which they develop, so that they might have time to arrange themselves as they arise. Then it is not man who orders them, it is nature herself, and your business is only to let her arrange her own work.'

A rightly brought up youth will always know the sentiments of friendship *before* those of love. The growing sensibility of the adolescent makes him aware of others, their needs, their unhappinesses, their dependence. He is then very prompt to feel sympathy and generosity toward others. This is the time to give opportunity for the expression of these social feelings and to develop an appreciation of the humanity of every one of his fellows. This provides in advance a safeguard against later absorption in a concentrated and exclusive affection with all its dangerous egotisms. Let *Émile* be taken, therefore, to see people less happy than himself and thus made acquainted with suffering and have his natural pity aroused; and, in view of the moral egotism of men in society this kind of action cannot be too much practiced, although one must be careful to guard against notions of vanity or superiority or interest creeping into the active sympathy. At any rate such occasions are the first when man identifies himself with another. But will not this scene of desolation which induces him to commiserate others make him unhappy, too? 'To pity the ill suffered by another, one must undoubtedly know it, but one need not feel it.' There is a difference—noted by Plato—between the observation of

¹ Cf. Locke, *Recreations*, sect. 60: 'Shame in children has the same place that modesty has in women. . . .'

evil and the direct experience of it in one's own soul. Moreover, pity is an active sentiment, not merely a feeling of the other's suffering, and the activity in which it enlists man is of itself grateful. It is far too gross a notion of happiness that will not admit such satisfactions, for happiness does not consist in 'gaiety and riotous joy' but in a moderate and serene enjoyment of life which scarcely shows itself to others, save in the human countenance.¹ And the face of a youth who knows pity for humanity bears not on it the marks of unhappiness.

About other sights in the world at large one must have a care, as Plato warned, that these spectacles be the kind which restrain and do not excite. For this reason again, large cities must be avoided. Even in the country, look to the company the boy keeps, though it is well to let him become acquainted with men in the various conditions of life and know himself to be essentially one with them as a human being. But his affections, of course, will be definitely centred only on those most like himself, and it is primarily in dealing with them that he will show generosity and gratitude and willingness to serve them. 'Ingratitude is not in the heart of man, but interest is there: there are fewer persons under obligations who are ungrateful than there are benefactors interested in having them so obliged.'² Gratitude is a 'natural sentiment' wherever men live together in continual give and take. In friendship with equals, a youth acquires his first sentiments of personal goodness. 'Whence I conclude that it is not true that the precepts of the natural law are founded only on reason; they have a more solid and certain basis. It is the love of men derived from the love of oneself that is the principle of human justice.'³

Nevertheless, when a love of others near us develops, a self-love simultaneously appears. The newly-acquired sense of justice demands an equality of return for what is given in the way of affection. One wants some regard from others, and begins looking at oneself comparatively, in relation to others. Then the love of self definitely takes the form of self-love. From this passion many others come, and so it remains for us to determine, by the method of our education, whether the inevitable development is to yield the finely-human or the invidious passions. All depends now on what the youth regards as his own rightful place amongst men and the way he thinks of attaining it. And it is now necessary to disclose to him the picture of the whole

¹ *Émile*, pp. 199-200; cf. Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 1, ch. xxv. *De l'institution des enfants*, 'La plus expresse marque de la sagesse, c'est une esjouissance constante; son estat est, comme les choses au dessus de la lune, tousjours serein': vol. 1, p. 192.

² *Émile*, p. 204.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 205 n.

social order as it is, with all its inequalities of men, in rank, wealth, power.¹ He must see men without their masks, because he will soon be dealing with them. 'If men deceive him, he will feel hatred toward them; but if, while respected by them, he sees them mutually deceiving each other, he will only bear pity toward them.' As in Plato's *Republic*, the young citizen must not know injustice in his own experience but only observe it in others, thereby achieving a disinterested judgment of right and wrong. Too early an experience of deception and injustice will only cause a misanthropy. But if Émile knows through his own association with those who have cared for him, and acts himself on the knowledge, that 'man is naturally good' and that his neighbors must be like himself, he will not attribute the evil he witnesses essentially to others but rather to their society and its values; and by acquiring this critical attitude toward common opinions and practices he will not be disposed to take his own measure as a man by those false standards of society. His self-love will not then be a vicious self-love.

For this enlightenment as to society the study of history is useful. Such writers as Thucydides are to be recommended, although they all tend to take war too much as a matter of course, like an event of nature, and they fail to see its causes in the will of man. More instructive still, then, are the lives of great men showing the role of the good or the bad will, and as Montaigne said, 'there my man is Plutarch'.² In general the ancient writers are preferable to the modern, for they expose the cost of much that passes for happiness in society. The classical lessons on such things as worldly ambition turn one away from the goods of opinion. But they need not create an aversion or hatred of the people who are themselves suffering under such prejudices. 'It is our own passions that rouse us up against those of others; it is our self-interest that makes us hate the wicked; if they did no evil to us, we should feel more pity than hatred toward them. The evil that the bad do to us makes us forget what they do to themselves. We could pardon them their vices more easily, if we could know how much their own hearts punish them for it. We are aware of the offense, and we do not see the chastisement; the benefits are apparent, the pain is internal. . . . The passions we share are the ones that seduce us; those that shock our interests make us revolt, and by an inconsequentiality of the passions, we blame in others what we would like to imitate. The aversion and the illusion are inevitable when we are forced to suffer at the hands of another the evil that we would do him if we were in his place. What is it we need,

¹ *Émile*, p. 207; cf. Locke, *Knowledge of the World*, sect. 94.

² *Émile*, p. 211.

then, in order to observe men well? A great interest in knowing them, a great impartiality in judging, a heart sufficiently sensitive to be able to conceive what all the human passions are, and yet calm enough not to experience them.'¹ Émile is to be a calm, sympathetic, interested observer of men. He is trained to judge without any bias from opinion but simply from what he knows; he does not share the common passions and is not likely to be aroused to the hateful attitude, because in fact the worst evil he can think of is simply servitude, all else leaving him unmoved. Where most others would envy, he will pity, and he will pity their lack of liberty on account of all their show of wealth, honors, pleasures, and even pity their wickedness as really an ill for themselves as well as for others. Yet one last thing the guardian must watch, lest the youth, with his self-love now in play, takes this as an occasion for comparing himself with those who are wicked or weak, and begin thereby to feel himself a superior person. Pride at this moment may lead to a disdain and contempt, and undo the whole of his moral education. Some men are born to be great and are conscious of their superiority and prove it in their lives, but Émile is only an ordinary child, not supposed to have the powers to justify any consciousness of genius. His education must, therefore, safeguard him against such pride and vanity. He should be exposed to people who will dampen his rising conceit and put him in his place, people who can outwit him and beat him at the games of life. Only one type of exposure the guardian himself must prevent at this stage, that to the wiles of courtesans, for there is to be no learning from experience in that matter. In most other things the moral lessons may all be had without hurt, and they may be helped out imaginatively with literary fables, which are now in order.

Having begun to act a little in the world, Émile is a wiser spectator, for moral understanding always develops from action that is natural and right. The youthful practice of doing good to those in his own neighborhood provides him with a criterion of good by which to judge what he observes. He is not supposed to become a knight-errant to go out in the world redressing all its wrongs, but he will be something like the young 'illustrious Romans' who found their greatest interest in the pursuit of crime and the defense of the innocent. He will love peace, too, as he loves justice, and will do what promotes both these great ends. That activity of well-doing develops, along with the interest in his fellows, therefore, a genuine moral wisdom: 'It is not possible that, taking so much interest in his fellows, he will

¹ Ibid., pp. 214-15.

not learn soon to weigh and appreciate their actions, their tastes, their pleasures, and in general put a more just value on what it is that can contribute to or injure the happiness of men than do those who, never interesting themselves in any one, never do anything for others.'¹

Thus morality is but an eventual development of the fundamental love of oneself. 'Let us extend self-love so as to comprise other beings and we shall transform it into virtue; and there is no human heart in which that virtue has no root. The less the object of our concerns has immediately to do with ourselves, the less the illusion of private interest is to be feared; the more one generalises that interest, the more equitable it becomes, and the love of the human race is nothing else in us but the love of justice. . . . The more his (Émile's) attentions are devoted to the happiness of others, the more enlightened and wiser they will be, and the less he will be deceived as regards what is good or bad. . . . It means little to him if a very great happiness must be shared, provided it make for the greatest happiness of all: that is the first interest of the sage after private interest; for every one is part of his species, and not of any other individual. To prevent pity from degenerating into weakness, then, it is necessary that it be generalised and extended to the whole human race. Then one does not yield to it except it be in accord with justice, for of all the virtues justice is that which has the most to do for the common good of all men.'²

At the contemplation of his pupil thus on the way to attaining moral excellence Rousseau was well pleased, though he was inclined to suspect that other people would look upon his notions as merely chimerical. 'The true principles of justice, the true models of beauty, all the moral relationships of beings, all the ideas of order engrave themselves on his understanding. . . .'

When the mind has been started thinking about moral values, it will go on to speculation about things more ultimate still. So the interest in religion is natural at this period. The philosophers, such as Locke, suppose that man first acquires the idea of 'spirit' by reflection on his own mind and its activity, and then passes to that of 'body'. However, both these ideas are abstractions, and it is difficult to see how one or the other could be a primary knowledge. It is more reasonable to assume that the experience of acting and being acted upon by things disposes man to attribute an animate nature to them in general, and that only long and slow processes have brought him to his definite notions of a 'thinking being' and an 'extended being' distinct from each other; and at a still farther reach, the abstract

¹ *Émile*, p. 223.

² *Ibid.*, p. 224.

notion of a single Being or Substance which comprehends both these distinct beings. The attributes of the Being called God are, then, very far beyond the grasp of a mind just at the beginning of thought.¹

'All is finite for children.' What meaning, then, can infinity have for them? These things are mysteries enough to the wise. Well, may they not be taught as such to the young? 'I say further, that to admit mysteries it is requisite that one shall at least comprehend that they are incomprehensible; and children are not even capable of that conception. For the age where all is mystery, there is no mystery at all properly speaking.' That is why Émile has not been taught the catechism. It is impossible for one so young to believe, and it is simply a brutal 'principle of sanguinary intolerance' to hold that if they do not believe in God, early or late, they will be damned. No one can believe at will; every one must wait for understanding. To enrol a child before that time is only to make him member of a sect, not a religious being. There is a veritable religion of nature, and the child is, at this precious moment, actually seeking it. So man's education ought here again to follow that of nature herself, and avoid spoiling things by book-learning and catechisms. The way to supply the need of a child is by speaking sincerely and honestly about all the questions, in the exemplary manner of the Savoyard Vicar of Rousseau's own memories. He was prompted to retell the *Profession of Faith* which his imagination had since wrought from those memories.²

To a youth true religious belief is a great reinforcement of his moral power, one very much needed at the time of the onset of the strongest passions of his life. 'It is then only that he finds it to be his veritable interest to be good, to do good far from the regards of men, and without being forced to do so by the laws; to be just as between God and himself, to do his duty, even at the cost of life, and to bear in his heart virtue, not only for the love of order, for which every one will always prefer the love of self, but for the love of the Author of his being, a love which confounds itself with that same love of self; and to enjoy in the end lasting happiness in the other life which the repose of a good conscience and the contemplation of that Supreme Being promise one, when one has made good use of his life.'³

¹ Ibid., pp. 226-8. Cf. the opposite view of Locke. *Knowledge of the World*, 'God', sect. 136, 'there ought very early to be imprinted on his mind a true notion of God, as of the independent Supreme Being, Author, and Maker of all things. . . .', and *Reading*, sect. 157.

² *Émile*, pp. 228-31. The *Profession of Faith* being a distinct discourse on religion is treated separately in the following chapter.

³ Ibid., p. 288.

After religious instruction *Émile* can at last receive that on sex. Thus late it ought to come for 'the man of nature', very much later than one expects from experience and custom. The life of man in civilised society is calculated to excite the interest and give the knowledge far too soon, and invariably before the youth is able to be responsible for his own person. The ordinary notion is that there ought to be early marriage. Yet that is not the best policy, for it means charging a young man who is little ready for any responsibility with the care of another person besides himself, and even of another generation. For *Émile*, at any rate, this recourse to early marriage is unnecessary. His imagination has not been prematurely aroused, and his moral self-reliance is something to count upon. He may be put on his own responsibility and frankly informed of the whole truth about sex by the person in whom he has the greatest confidence. But this instruction must not be the affair of a moment, much less of any very solemn one. It must come in the midst of other interests and on the right occasions. Meanwhile the youth ought not to be allowed to spend all his time reading or in idleness and solitude, nor lead a soft and sedentary life lolling about with women and young folks; he must be kept active and occupied, not only at work but in energetic pursuits such as hunting, the only value that murderous sport has. The allegory was felicitous which made 'Diana the enemy of love'. The hearty activity of the chase suspends, in a manner, the other passion. And such circumstances give one the right opportunity for speaking of sex calmly without kindling its fires.

'One of the errors of our age is to employ reason too nakedly, as if men were nothing but intellect.'¹ We ignore the 'language of signs' and favor words too much, and even then fail to touch the affections and persuade by eloquence. The French language in particular seemed to Rousseau ill-suited to the present task, on account of the very features which lead people to call it 'chaste'—it is really obscene precisely because of its finesse and delicacy of detours in expressions regarding sex: to avoid so carefully one must be thinking much on these matters. 'It is impossible to imagine a language more modest than that of the Bible, precisely because all is there said with naïveté. To make the same things immodest one needs only to translate them into French.' The instructions for *Émile* shall not be given thus, nor yet in bald precept, but rather in the form of a disclosure of 'laws of nature', which have an inexorable necessity so that infractions of them must result in physical and moral ill. When speaking, too, of the act of generation and its gratification one

¹ *Émile*, p. 294.

should mention, in the same breath, the enhanced delight of an exclusive attachment with its duties of fidelity and chastity. The marriage union should be described, 'as not only the sweetest of relationships but also the most inviolable and holiest of all contracts'. One should not refrain from showing the horrors of debauchery, its coarsening and stupefying effects, the tendency to all sorts of disorders, in contrast with the effects of a life of chastity, the health, strength, courage, virtue, and even the greater love itself, and all the true goods of man, so that chastity will be deemed 'desirable and precious'.¹

With his imagination thus opened to the possibilities of good and evil in the choice before him, *Émile* is not likely to do anything rash, or cut loose from his friend and guardian. On the contrary, he will depend upon him still, and want more guidance. He will pray, as it were: 'I want to obey your laws, I always want to, it is my constant will; if ever I disobey you, it will be in spite of myself: make me free by protecting me against my passions that do me violence; keep me from being their slave, and force me to be my own master, never obeying my senses but always my reason.'²

But the guardian, sure of him now, bids him go seek the companion of his heart. He even spurs him on by painting a picture of the perfections he is to find, though careful not to make the model impossibly perfect. To arouse that kind of imagination is actually to guard against temptations of sense, for the very thought of adultery or low associations will be repugnant in contrast to the ideal. Besides, 'it is less sensuality than vanity from which one must preserve a young man entering the world: he will yield more to the desires of others than to his own, and false pride makes more libertines than love'. Young men are ashamed not to do the things that are done by others. They cannot stand out against the general opinion and they have insufficient insight to understand what authority that opinion exercises over them. On this point *Émile* is enlightened by his guardian: 'They want to lower you to their low position, and only reproach you for allowing yourself to be governed in order to govern you yourselves. . . . They have done nothing themselves but imitate other thoughtless fellows, as they want to be copied in their turn. To put themselves above the pretended prejudices of their fathers, they submit themselves slavishly to those of their comrades. . . . They deceive themselves in order to fool you; they are not in accord with themselves: their hearts give them the lie without end, and often their very words contradict them.'³

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 299.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 302-5.

'Up to twenty years the body is growing, and it needs all its substance—so continence is then in the order of nature, and one can scarcely be lacking in it without cost to his constitution. After twenty years, continence is a moral duty; it is important to learn to rule over oneself, to remain the master of one's appetites.'¹

The 'man of nature' is equal to this moral self-mastery. A portraiture of him follows: a young man of sound judgment, saying little, inconspicuous, independent without making a show of it; wanting to please others; true and tender, deferential to age; at all times, indeed, well-mannered yet not with polite airs, and always rejoicing to find others approving of what he likes.

The entrance of Émile into society gives rise to another development—an aesthetic judgment or taste. When man likes the society of others, he wants them to like him and seeks to learn what it is that will please or displease them. This interest is keen where men and women are associated with each other, and it naturally results in the formation of a judgment concerning what will be pleasant or unpleasant to people *generally*, not simply to this or that particular individual. Thus general notions develop of what is fine or beautiful, and the converse, and this acquisition is not peculiar to the few but 'natural to all men'. The power thus acquired is called Taste and it is defined as 'the faculty of judging what pleases or displeases the greatest number of people'.²

The phenomenon here is not unlike what Rousseau had previously treated in his study of political society. A general judgment of values obtains analogous to the general will, a judgment in which all share, and a judgment whose standard of reference is the pleasure of all as distinct from the interests of the few. But this theory does not mean, any more than the political theory, that *all* men have a right judgment or that *any one* alone possesses it in regard to *every matter*—it is an ideal competence like human virtue in general, and it must be tried for by every route.

At this juncture Émile's guardian draws a conclusion which is startling in its contrast to his previous recommendations—to acquire good taste one must go to *Paris*! Only in that city where so many hearts are engaged in the search for the beauties of literature and art, and where criticism is so rampant, only

¹ *Émile*, p. 307.

² *Ibid.*, p. 313; cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1281b; Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. 1, ch. 54. *Des Vaines Subtilitez*, 'la poésie populaire et purement naturelle', vol. i, p. 435 f.

there is one likely to get the fullest development of one's capacity to judge concerning what is of universal value, providing, of course, the moral and religious character of the student has been first established. Just as in politics the practical way to approximate what is the general will is to have all the different conflicting wills brought out and made known, so here it is only by the acquaintance with the varied talents and the criticism of the city that a person may attain to perfection of judgment. So Émile and his guide go to Paris at last. They visit the theatre, 'not to study morals, but good taste'. It is the poesy Émile will love, not the passion; the beauty, not the exciting images wherewith it is represented to the senses. Where another youth would find indulgence, as in 'the Fourth Book of the *Æneid*, Tibullus, or Plato's Symposium', he will read with profit and ascend the scale of wisdom through love. 'My chief object, in teaching him to be sensitive to and love the beautiful in all its *genres* is to fix his affections and his tastes, to keep his natural appetites from any alteration, so that he will some day look for the way to happiness not in his wealth, but close at hand, in himself.'¹

Rousseau entered upon a long digression on finding one's happiness near at hand. He sketched a life as he would have it for himself. Its first goods are leisure and liberty, then health, temperance, living as near to nature as possible, enjoying each season—not covering the hearth, as so many do, with forced flowers and plants in January, for 'to do that is less to ornament winter than deflower spring, it is to take away the pleasure of going into the woods to seek the first violet, or spy the first buds'. In material things he would do all his own buying, in order to know about the fruits and provisions of earth; live in a small cottage, with some privacy for every one; have just enough means to feel at ease. His social ties would be only those of a real attachment on both sides, and like tastes, and mutually-suited characters. He scarcely dared to put into the desiderata a true love with reciprocal possession, but anything else certainly would be repugnant. A house and a garden he would surely have, a tiled house with a court for cattle, 'to have milk, which I like very much'. For festivity he would join the country-folk at their fairs. 'If you wish to disengage the pleasures from the pains, take away exclusiveness; the more you leave them common to men, the more purely you will enjoy them. . . . Once again on that point, the exclusive pleasures are the death of pleasure; those one wants to have alone one no longer does have.

¹ *Émile*, pp. 314–17; cf. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 19, ch. 8, 'La société des femmes gâte les mœurs et forme le goût'.

If the walls I raise about my park make a melancholy enclosure of it for me, I have only been at great expense to deprive myself of the pleasure of the promenade; there you see me forced to go out and seek it at a distance. The demon of property infects all that it touches. A rich man wants to be everywhere the master, and does not feel well where he is not so; he is for ever forced to flee himself.¹

The dream of that true happiness was all meant for Émile, and more than that, indeed, would be possible to him, were he to succeed in finding the companion of his heart. At this moment a guardian is expected, ordinarily, to take his leave: '“Since our young gentleman”, says Locke, “is ready to marry, it is time to leave him in the presence of his mistress.”’ And right there he finishes his work. For myself who do not have the honor of raising a gentleman, I shall take good care not to imitate Locke in that.²

No, Rousseau would walk with Émile and Sophie in the garden of their earthly paradise and watch over the course of their love, knowing that it would set the seal upon the character of his young man: 'His manners of thinking, his sentiments, his tastes, fixed by a lasting passion, will acquire a consistency which will never more permit them to change.'³ The guardian was still needed to give guidance and moral instruction for such lasting passion: 'My child, there is no happiness at all without courage, nor virtue without combat. . . . Who, then, is the virtuous man? It is he who knows how to conquer his own affections; for then he follows his reason, his conscience; he does his duty; he holds fast to order, and nothing can take him away from it. Up to now you have been free only in appearance; you had only the precarious liberty of a slave to whom no one has commanded anything. Now be free in fact; learn to become your own master: command your own heart, O Émile, and you will be virtuous.'

'It is an error to make a distinction between the passions that are permissible and those that are forbidden, to give oneself up to the former and refuse the latter. All are good when one remains the master of them; all are bad when one allows oneself to be subject to them. . . . All the feelings that we rule are lawful; all those that dominate us are criminal. A man is not culpable for loving the wife of another if he keeps that unhappy passion subject to the law of duty; he is culpable in so loving his own wife that he will sacrifice all else to that love.' 'Do you

¹ *Émile*, pp. 317-28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 328. Immediately following this is the separate piece on *Sophie or Woman*, which, being composed first and distinct as a composition, has been treated in the preceding chapter; cf. Locke, *Travel*, sect. 216, end.

³ *Émile*, p. 388.

want to live happy and wise, then, attach your heart only to the beauty that never perishes: let your condition set a limit to your desires, let your duties have precedence to your inclinations: extend the law of necessity to moral things.'¹

To put their love to the test, the guardian requires Émile to leave Sophie for two years' travelling, when he learns foreign ways and languages, studies natural history and peoples and laws and governments. Here Rousseau incorporated a summary of his treatise on *The Principles of Political Right* and some short essays containing thoughts from his papers dealing with the true wealth of nations, the relations of provinces to capital cities, and the happiness of the people.² Émile, after so much experience of the world and instruction, is then confronted with the decision as to the land in which he will make his own home: he is advised to decide for the land of his birth, but to make that a real decision and commitment, that is, to make it a true social contract on his own part. That decided, the marriage union can be undertaken, and it will be a success if they 'continue to be lovers when they are husband and wife'.³ But lasting love is possible only on certain conditions. 'In marriage, hearts are bound, but bodies are not given in subjection. You owe each other fidelity, not complaisance. Each of you can only be for the other, but neither ought to be for the other except when it is welcome. . . . Remember always, that, even in marriage, pleasure is not lawful save when the desire is shared. . . . Remember, both of you, that you are free, and that it is not a question here of the duties of husband and wife. . . .' They are then promised a maturity of their love that will surpass its Spring vitality, due to the calmer sweetness of their constant life together and their attachments to their children, bonds 'no less sweet, and oftentimes stronger, than love itself'.⁴

The story ends with a scene months later, when Émile comes to his old master, rejoicing to tell the prospect of his being a father. That he would thus rejoice over it was proof, to the older man, of the success of his education according to Nature.

For in that conclusion Rousseau was passing a judgment on Jean-Jacques. Once, at Paris, a young man, playing the gentleman, a dabbler in arts and letters, had looked upon the advent of his children as an 'affliction', and he had put them away from him, for one reason, among others equally insufficient, that they

¹ Ibid., pp. 416-18.

² Cf. Locke, *Travel*, sect. 212. This 'summary' of the *Social Contract* is dealt with, subsequently, in chapter xviii.

³ *Émile*, p. 448.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 449-51.

could not be reared and educated in his household. He had not known a mother's care himself, nor any proper training at home; he had no inkling, then, of the meaning of parental affection in human nature, what character and mind it achieves, and even what greater love it confers because of the bonds of children. He who had read heroic and romantic literature too soon as a boy, and to all hours of the night, had notions only of a romantic love, and had been plunged, again too soon, into experience of it. Only when he had won his way, by the charm of his nature and appreciations, to intimacy with women of quality who were deeply serious about their children, and took their problems to him and made him see how unhappy they were—and he perceived, too, demoralised—because the customs of the age took their children away from their care and committed them to nunneries or to the charge of tutors, only then at last were his eyes opened to the love of children as a power of greater significance than all powers of a public nature. Domestic education seemed the one thing essential to the righting of all wrongs in every quarter. And everything then appeared to have happened out of order in his own life, and also in that of others, beginning with the state of things he witnessed around him where children always had other nurses than their mothers and passed at once under the influence of the world which least cared about them. From such a bad beginning himself he had got all things either too soon or too late, never at the right time; his early reading, encouraged by his father, had made his imagination too active, and his emotions precocious; susceptible, ready to respond to others, he followed opinion and was swept into the stream of experience; equally sensitive to the dependence on others he revolted against social influences, and his pride and self-love were evoked too early, making him too prompt to see servitude and to crave independence, a disposition making of him a mixture of the unsocial and the ingratiatingly social, ill-suited for a life in Paris; renouncing the sociability of that life, he was by chance, or by necessity, projected into a great passion and into quarrels with friends, always too precipitate, too affectionate, too quick to anger, too proud, too obstinate, too much disposed, like the spoiled infant of his picture, to take all refusals and differences as unjust hostility, instead of natural human opinions sometimes disagreeing, often agreeing. His own career was spoiled by such bad traits. And the story of *Émile* was his way of realising the fact, for it was an ideal autobiography where he saw himself again as a youth running the course of life, this time, in the right order, beginning at home, given good physique, habits of good will, character, knowledge, first of Nature then

of Man, true friendship before love, and love itself disciplined by absence and by travelling to see the world, and Paris and literature and art, these things coming at the end, not as in his own melancholy career. Some things in this revised career did repeat exactly what came to him in actuality, for he chanced upon some things of imperishable beauty and goodness in his experience of both good and evil. It was good to win knowledge for oneself, to acquire the science of nature and, in due course, languages and philosophy, by the experimental method, as in those memorable days at Les Charmettes. It was good to love Nature and meet with one or two who sincerely believed in God and worshipped him, like the Savoyard Vicar. It was good to free oneself from passions and achieve wisdom, even a late wisdom. These experiences were worth repeating in the story. Yet on the whole the *Émile* implied a judgment on himself and it was, as he more than once confessed, a work of 'expiation'.

For all that, *Émile* is chiefly a book about human nature, not about J. J. Rousseau. Despite those elements of biography it is not simply a description of the idiosyncrasies in the career of the author. He pleaded himself, at the start, that any peculiarity of illustration and experience should be overlooked and that only the principles should be attended to by the reader. It is a book on man in general, and on the true course of his development so that he may become an individual and a good man in every situation of life. *Émile* is precisely what Rousseau called it, a treatise on 'the principles of education'.

CHAPTER XVII

PROFESSION OF FAITH

THE *Profession of Faith* was far more elaborate than was necessary to any Plan of Education. Showing the way of wisdom with an *Émile* required no such treatise on the metaphysics of morals and religion. Various other necessities and reasons dictated the writing of it, and its publication.

Deep in Rousseau's nature was an active religious susceptibility which had been aroused several times only to be postponed in its satisfaction either because of mundane ambitions or confusion of mind and purpose. In his very youth a crisis of illness had brought him to that profound fear which sobers over human thought and turns it toward more than natural concerns. At Les Charmettes were laid the foundations of his beliefs, that is, of his conscious beliefs, since, before that awakening there had been, in his own language, a 'sleep of reason', when he was, nevertheless, subject to influences of the Genevan tradition.¹ But close upon that fearful experience came a recuperation and rejoicing in the orchard of Charmettes whose delights he was impelled to celebrate in verse. Along with that first intimation of man's own weakness and mortality, then, came this other, and different, one, of the essential goodness of life and Nature, so that his religious sentiments were a blend of the love of Nature with the fear of the Eternal Being, Creator of all that is and the Judge of man. Hence it was that he could never go all the way with the writers of Port Royal, whom he was then reading, because they sounded too exclusively the note of the terrifying in religion. It was characteristic of him to attach himself strongly to one or two Jesuit priests of more gentle humanity than rigorous theology, men whose traits were eventually to be glorified in the Savoyard Vicar. He had to believe in a loving and a clement God, a Being whose perfection is known to man not only through the inward conviction of his own defections but also through witnessing the outward perfections of Nature, such loveliness as he himself then knew in the country of Savoy. The essential meaning of God, therefore, was that of a Providence whose Will is perfect and just for all creatures, and who intends man to be all good, as well as Nature. Ideas like these were, of course, everywhere in the literature of religion and philosophy, but they were especially to be found in those writers whose thought was irradiated by Platonism and an appreciation of

¹ For a complete presentation of those influences and the whole development of religion see P. M. Masson, *La Formation religieuse de Rousseau*.

natural beauty, and notably in those priests of the Oratoire, Father Malebranche, and Father Lamy to whose books he was devoted. The ideas were old and oft-repeated, but they were made his own, and verified, in personal experience, and they were not simply an intellectual appropriation from books.

Yet the moral efforts which were aroused at this religious awakening were all turned toward an intellectual self-improvement. He was ashamed of his ignorance and lack of cultivation, and taught himself in literature, science, mathematics, politics, philosophy. One of the prayers he composed at Les Charmettes besought God to 'bless the work of this day',—and intellectual work was meant. Thus the time came when books were everything to him, and his ambitions were all for success in the writer's calling. His intimacy with the young Spaniard, Altuna, discovered him not too docile in his piety and very much inclined to 'reasoning' in religion. He found his way into the society of the coming men of letters in Paris whose triumphs and genius he admired and he was naturally carried away by their enthusiasms and aroused to emulation of them.

The young Diderot of 1745, thirty-two years old, a year younger than himself, had been precisely the man to carry him over without shock from the older notions to some of the newer views, for he was then a devotee of Shaftesbury and Bayle and was avowedly theistic as well as free-thinking. He professed to believe in Christianity, and even acknowledged a certain amount of unintended agreement with the reformers in opposing the authority of the Church. Religion is a matter of personal sentiment and it is written in the human heart, which naturally values goodness and equity and believes that God is perfectly good and just, concerned always for the general good of the whole.¹ This Providence, it is true, Diderot conceived in very general terms. The object of the Divine care is the species: it is simply mankind or the human race that is saved or preserved—and by implication man *as an individual* must save himself by the use of his own intelligence and arts and devices, his inventions, societies, institutions, and so on. It was admirably consequential of Diderot to found his *Encyclopedia* in 1746 in order to disseminate the knowledge of these things so necessary to make the life of every man good and happy. The philosophy of Diderot was itself a faith and optimistic enthusiasm, which he had the ability to put into definite form and program, so as to bring a goodly number of fine men together in a kind of secular communion. And Rousseau, carried away by such enthusiasm,

¹ See *Pensées Philosophiques*, No. 61, *Œuvres*, vol. i, p. 154; *La Promenade*, *ibid.*, pp. 184-5; *De la suffisance*, *ibid.*, pp. 269-70.

was then very proud to play a part in the enterprise, as an expert on music, and later, even on politics. He too envisaged God and Nature together, and man as a creature put on his own responsibility for his destiny. It was in accordance with this way of thinking, indeed, that he formed his own greatest project, his book on *Political Institutions*, intended to show the law of nature in politics, which is a will for the general good and happiness of all, like the providential will of God.¹ Thus Rousseau's own religious seriousness then became absorbed in high Platonic projects for the betterment of man through a political re-constitution of society.

But the passion for success in the realm of letters was avidly indulged, and at great cost to himself as a man. He would have no ties, no wife, nor children; and he sacrificed a home for his country and the world, for all of which he very soon felt at first profound uncasiness, then humiliation and remorse. The bitter remarks he had made about the 'cosmopolitan' were quite as much a self-condemnation as a criticism of the tendency of his associates. Pride was aroused as well as humility, and it made him turn in defiance against the influences of Paris that had so captured his will and made him unhappy. The *Discourse* of 1749, dramatically successful in the world of letters, had nevertheless been symptomatic of his personal revulsion against precisely such successes and all the other values of that civilisation. His finer energies were devoted, in the several years that followed upon this outburst, to a collecting of his thought for the work of reform in the *Political Institutions*. Yet in the midst of this preparation for a worthy achievement came the *Second Discourse*, another letting loose of his fury of defiance at the actualities of society and politics, and also a second indictment of himself which spurred him on to a personal decision to get away from the Paris that had so spoiled him. It was his natural inclination to look back to Geneva which now shone in an ideal light before his disillusioned eyes, but he only got so far as to abjure the Catholicism which had come so easily to him, in order to become a true 'citizen of Geneva'. The action was more a civic commitment than a religious one. Nevertheless, it was an act of affiliation significant of a turn of sentiment, although it was not accompanied by any explicit declaration of what his beliefs actually were after all that wandering astray among the infidels of Paris. Yet that public silence was natural enough, and quite to his credit. Those men at Paris were not simply infidels; they were his friends, who sometimes angered and grieved him

¹ Cf. A. Schinz, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, Oct.-Dec., 1912, pp. 741-90; R. Hubert, *Rousseau et l'Encyclopédie*, pp. 27 ff.

by their teasing discussions and atheism, but who liked him as he did them. They were all still very much one in regard to the things they rejected in politics and religion, the authoritarianism and its collateral doctrines of revelation and miracles. Nor did Rousseau mind the doubting spirit as such, for he shared it himself, being quite as much a disciple of Montaigne and Bayle as were any of them.

But Diderot started broaching very dogmatic views, far different in import from those of the time Rousseau first learned to think metaphysically with him. He showed signs of going beyond the scepticism of Bayle to a negative position. For Bayle had been at heart something of a Calvinist and had taken a stand on the Cartesian distinction between matter and thought as something which stopped atheism. Matter defined as pure extension is devoid of any power of motion or self-organisation, and since the world contains motion throughout it, there must be a distinct and sovereign Power as the cause and direction of moving Nature. So Bayle had welcomed Malebranche's proofs that no cause or power can ever be discerned in matter itself, but only 'occasions' for the exercise of God's true Causation and Will.¹ But Diderot did not follow Bayle in this. He was not fond of Malebranche and the Cartesians. And he rather fancied a new concept that had come into currency since Locke, that matter has motion as an essential property.² Leibniz had proposed something of the sort, but only of living matter, for he still insisted that there is an absolute distinction between the motion of living bodies and mechanical motion. The deist John Toland in his *Letters to Serena*, published in France, had come out wholeheartedly, however, for the doctrine that all matter whatsoever is endowed with motion. This had aroused Samuel Clarke, a theologian and professed Newtonian, to attack both the science and the metaphysics of this position.³ Those controversies had given greater prominence still to the idea, and Bayle had discussed them fully. Then the President of the Royal Society in Berlin, Maupertuis, gave a new turn to the view by proposing to include consciousness as well as motion among the

¹ Bayle, *Continuation des Pensées diverses, Œuvres diverses*, vol. iii, XXI-XXII, p. 217 n f; LXVI, p. 286; CV-CVI, pp. 333-5; CX-CXI, pp. 340-2; and articles in *Dictionnaire raisonné*, Leukippus, vol. iii, p. 770; Rorarius, vol. iv, p. 900 f.; article in *Les Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, Apr. 1684, vol. i, p. 49 (referring to Malebranche).

² Diderot's repudiation of Descartes, Clarke, and Malebranche is in *Suite de l'Apologie*, sect. 14, *Œuvres*, vol. i, p. 477; *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la Nature*, vol. ii, pp. 45-50.

³ S. Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers* (Boyle Lecture, 1704). Prop. 3, pp. 23-30.

attributes of matter. Diderot the Encyclopedist was *au courant* with these newer theories against the Cartesian dualism and metaphysics, and he valued them the more because they were not speculation merely, but the outcome of observations of scientists, especially those studying the minute living organism with the microscope. Consequently, he put the ideas forward in his own version, as *Thoughts on the Interpretation of Nature* (1754): Matter may not be inert, not inanimate, not even unthinking, but quite capable of moving, organising, directing itself and exhibiting consciousness and will. This view was a conception of the world, for which Bayle had already invented the name by anticipation—*naturalism*.¹ At the end of his work Diderot's *Prayer* was: 'I am a portion, necessarily organised, of an eternal and necessary matter.'²

With all these thoughts Rousseau had been entirely out of sympathy. The ideal of Nature as All in All put away a spiritual Being and Providence. The implications—and Diderot was actually drawing them—were momentous for the life of man. In the first place, the soul was called nothing but 'the effect' of the bodily organisation, which ruled out immortality, forasmuch as that organisation disappears at death. Again it was implied that the organisation of men as a body-politic or society is 'natural' and that it is something more real than the individual and possesses a general will and a general 'self' superior to the person of the individual. Rousseau's attack on this political naturalism went on record in the first tentatives of his book on politics where he tried to show that the organisation of any society of conscious, self-interested beings is not a merely natural phenomenon but a hard-earned result of agreement on the part of the individuals dealing with each other—it is man's work, and, of course, man's own responsibility. That other view really took the heart out of a reformer, and indeed, because of it the Encyclopedists compromised in their politics, for they acquiesced in a sheer palliative, the doctrine of 'limited monarchy' as something natural and historically developed.³ Rousseau was opposed to such notions and recorded his opposition and questions. But some of his questions were not put into writing, because there was then no work at hand to which they would have been pertinent—they were in his mind nevertheless. If 'spirit' in man is but 'an effect' of bodily organisation, then Spirit in Nature is merely a like effect and not the true Cause and Power that reli-

¹ Diderot, *Pensées sur l'interprétation*, L, LI, *Œuvres*, vol. i, pp. 45-50. Bayle, *Continuation*, I, XXIV, *Œuvres diverses*, vol. iii, p. 294 and note.

² Diderot, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

³ See, for a full and just account, René Hubert, *Rousseau et l'Encyclopédie*, Paris, pp. 27 f., 36 ff., 48-9, 111, 118 ff.

gious men had proclaimed to be God. That being so, God would have no more to do with Nature, by the theory, than man as an individual person has in *his* lesser world of institutions. Thus Providence was felt to be denied, in any meaningful sense. So the new views of Diderot were profoundly disturbing to Rousseau's implicit belief regarding both Providence and man.

But no issue was openly raised between them at the time. They continued to profess friendship after their minds had already gone apart: their feelings remained loyal, despite times of vexation, irritability, and anger. It was not against Diderot or any other of that circle whose anti-religious bias so hurt him that Rousseau directed his first attack: it was against Voltaire, whom he accused, in his heart, of setting the intellectual tone to the age and misleading all his contemporaries.

The *Letter to Voltaire* in 1756 was an unexpected outburst, and as epochal as the *First Discourse* had been seven years before. It was more significant, too, because it was not intended for public consumption, though, of course, Rousseau would have liked people to see him score his points against the man who had made such mockery of his *Discourses*. Still, he was sincerely defending his own beliefs, and taking the position of disadvantage with a wit who invariably worsted any opponent on the very best ground. He had so long kept quiet under tantalising aspersions of his belief that he now seemed too pent-up to tolerate silence. He answered Voltaire for himself, although the poem was a challenge to the Encyclopedists generally, on account of their optimism—and in fact a defense from them did come, in the *Literary Correspondence*; one similar to his own in the arguments that the general course of Nature must be considered, and not only isolated occurrences as the earthquake at Lisbon, that in general all is good because all is governed by general law, and that, in the records of time, all the kinds or species are seen to be preserved—so much Providence there surely is.¹ In their analogous argument, however, it was Nature rather than God that figured. While such reasonings might be good enough as retort to Voltaire's pessimism, they could not satisfy Rousseau who was searching to define the meaning of Providence so that it would include a more real consideration of the individual man. It seemed to him that if eternity and not merely a lifetime on earth were included in the reckoning of good and ill for the individual, then it might well be declared there is a Providence who cares for each and every soul like the ideal shepherd or Statesman of Plato's vision. But Rousseau was confronting a problem he found too hard to solve—why is there

¹ *Corr. Litt.*, Apr. 1756, vol. iii, p. 199 f.

evil at all? Of course, he could deny 'natural evil', and ascribe 'moral evil' to man's own will and doing, his freedom itself being a boon worth the price. Still he confronted the age-old dilemma posed by the Epicurean in Cicero's *Concerning the Nature of the Gods*, and repeated by Bayle and others, that a reasoner must perforce make his choice between an Omnipotent God and a Perfectly Beneficent God, and, for the moment obsessed with a hatred of the very ideal of Power, he made his choice, giving up an Almighty in order to retain a Just God, a surrender not at all in accord with the religious tradition nor with those philosophical writers who had great prestige in his eyes, Bayle, Malebranche, Leibniz, nor with his own ultimate thought.¹ This first profession of faith was not reasoned out; it was simply a taking of position on the ground of sentiment or consciousness—a first sketch of something needing long development like that other piece of writing he had dashed off in midsummer on the road to Vincennes.

In closing the *Letter to Voltaire* he had broached the project of a Catechism for a good citizen as the worthy culmination of a career such as Voltaire's. He may have gone on to the formulation of this himself, giving expression to the first eloquent impulses of belief that were to become his profession of faith, for he sent something he called a Catechism to Mme d'Houdetot.² It is also possible that he then composed an *Allegorical Piece on Revelation*.³

Those first efforts made, he sank back into less metaphysical dreams, lost to a new preoccupation, a lover's tale, and then absorbed in the despairs and joys of love in reality and quarrels with his friends. Illness, too, and quite serious illness, was added to the depression of his despair and humiliation. Some hard-learned personal lessons came out of that experience, and a deep seriousness about the final judgment upon himself. His *Moral Letters* followed, another justification of his faith, this time in human conscience, a metaphysics of morality, spoiled somewhat by its animus against 'the *entourage* of Diderot' and its attempt to take over the guardianship of his beloved's spirit in her association with the free-thinkers and free-talkers at Paris, amongst whom was St. Lambert himself, her true love. Those *Letters* constituted a philosophical defense of the soul, its freedom and immortality, and of God. They attacked materialism and sensationism. They put the question as to what is meant by knowledge

¹ Even the sceptical Bayle insisted on the attribute of Infinite Power, *Continuation*, CIV, *Œuvres*, vol. iii, p. 330.

² To Mme d'Houdetot, probably July 1757, *C.G.*, vol. iii, p. 99.

³ P. M. Masson, *La Profession de foi*, p. 17; *Questions de chronologie rousseauiste*, *Annales*, vol. IX, pp. 56-61.

and whether it can be identified with the mere working-up of the data of the senses. The procedure was like that of Pascal, Malebranche, and Bayle, showing the everlasting inconclusiveness of reasoning based on experience without the assumption of some 'principles' which were not themselves to be attained by 'reasoning'. In support of this the Platonist-Cartesian Leibniz was on his side. But Rousseau wavered between attributing this 'appreciation' of first principles to 'reason', in the broad sense of the Greeks, and to what the modern philosophers, such as Malebranche, Locke, and Shaftesbury, called 'the internal sense' or sentiment, in contrast with the external senses of vision, touch, &c.¹ He drifted inevitably to the latter notion, determined by the older authorities in his thought rather than by the more recently-learned Leibniz. Montaigne had said, in his *Apology for Raymond Sébonde*, 'science is nothing other than sentiment'. Pascal likewise: 'all our reasoning comes down to a yielding to sentiment'. Although Bayle declared, in arguing against the supposed proof of religion from 'the consent of men', that 'the proofs of sentiment conclude nothing', it was only because no proof of ultimate truths, whether by reason or sentiment, seemed ever possible—Bayle allowed of a stand or decision from sentiment without argument, and spoke of 'mystery'.² The appreciation of all fundamental principles might thus be laid to sentiment. Man sets a value on himself and believes in his own power of initiative or freedom; he feels an interest in his fellows and becomes sociable; and finally he has a natural sense of right or moral conscience. The drift of these assertions was toward the declaration of an analogous religious sentiment, a feeling of the reality of perfection and love of the Good or God, as in Malebranche who described grace as 'a kind of instinct and sentiment' intimating the Divine.³ And such an outcome would have been consonant enough with the views of Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, that the beliefs in Providence and the Future Life 'powerfully interest our feelings' and are only fixed in the sentiments and the heart of every believer—'full assurance must be sensed and enjoyed'.⁴ But the *Moral Letters* stopped short before this position regarding the religious consciousness and sentiment—they were limited to a justification of faith in conscience.

¹ See Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, tr. Stock, 1197a.

² Montaigne, *Essais*, 'Apology', vol. ii, 256; Pascal, *Pensées*, 274; Bayle, *Continuation*, XX, p. 214.

³ Malebranche, *Méditations chrétiennes*, Méd. 13, p. 172.

⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, American ed., Phila., bk. 1, ch. 5 ('The Knowledge of God Conspicuous in the Formation and Continual Government of the World'), sect. 9, vol. i, p. 65; and ch. 7 ('The Testimony of the Spirit Defined'), sect. 14, p. 504.

But the personal letters to Pastor Vernes at Geneva were an unburdening of his mind on the religious questions pressing for a solution. He had friends nearby at Montmorency, priests of the Oratoire, with whose tradition he was deeply sympathetic from his long acquaintance with the writings of Lamy and Malebranche. He took pleasure in associating with them, but seemed to want a Protestant confidant above all, and Vernes was the one his heart seized upon. To him he stated very simply what seemed to him the principles of religion. He held the position Bayle had taken against atheism, that there is a most certainly known distinction between matter and spirit, two absolutely different 'substances'; that there is absolutely a spiritual substance, then, and all is not matter. Furthermore, as Bayle had urged against the Manichean doctrine, whose arguments he duly appreciated, Nature gives no evidence of two principles working in the operations of the world inasmuch as they all appear upon close study to follow general laws, and thus exhibit a 'unity of intention', that is, bespeaking a unique Power that wills and directs—a spiritual Power and Mind.¹ Thus Rousseau professed a belief in spiritual substance and a perfectly good and just God, and he rejected, in consequence, the doctrine of eternal damnation as incompatible with Divine Justice and Mercy. When he found to his surprise Pastor Vernes objecting to that faith and insisting that the revelation of the Scriptures is authoritative over the personal sentiments of the individual, he stood his own ground firmly. Such an orthodoxy was tantamount to denying the claims of the human conscience. Moreover, it was not even orthodox, for it was written in the *Institutes* of Calvin, and the subject of one of its chapters, that *The Testimony of the Spirit is Necessary to Confirm the Scripture, in order to the Complete Establishment of its Authority*. Further, it was contrary to Calvin's own definition of *Faith*. But Rousseau had no zest for arguing about authorities. He detected the trace of intolerance in Vernes and simply withdrew from any possible controversy. He may have gone back again to the *Institutes* to see more precisely how that question of personal conscience and revelation was handled there, for example in the chapter *Against the Fanaticism of Discarding Scripture, under the Pretence of Resorting to Immediate Revelations*. And he retired into himself to think more about the meaning of God in his own experience.²

He was prepared, indeed, for something admittedly in the

¹ Bayle, *Éclaircissements*, No. 2, *Œuvres*, vol. v, p. 827.

² The above chapters in Calvin's *Institutes*, bk. 1, ch. 7; bk. 3, ch. 2, and bk. 1, ch. 9. Cf. Malebranche's view that each one will judge reasons by his own internal conviction. *Recherche*, bk. 3, pt. 2, ch. 6, p. 303.

nature of a 'mystery'. Although his *Letter to D'Alembert* in 1758 was not intended as a discussion of the theological issues raised because of the attributed socinianism of the clergy of Geneva, it disclosed that Rousseau was then standing between the philosophers and the orthodox in his sentiments. He was very sympathetic with the so-called socinian clergy if only for the reason that they were now likely to be attacked by the more fervent churchmen like his friend Vernes; on the other hand he argued against D'Alembert, that the principles of any sphere of knowledge and belief are all undemonstrable by reason, whether they be principles of mathematics or morality or religion. In that sense they were veritable 'mysteries'.

But Rousseau developed his views through the imaginary conversations in *Julie* where he let himself go, now on one side, now on the other, as he steered his groping way between a rationalistic scepticism and a mysticism. The true God is, above all things, a clement God, with whose perfect justice and mercy the eternal damnation of souls is simply incompatible and therefore absolutely to be rejected. The human sense of justice is not to be traversed by any theological necessities—God's justice must be understandable, although all else about Him may be wrapt in the mystery of His eminent Perfection, especially his Power. God as the Almighty, however, was still uncomprehended, and it followed thence that the existence of evil in the world could not yet be explained—for when St. Preux tried to convince the sceptic Wolmar with the arguments used against Voltaire, he failed, and Julie took to her knees asking for light. But a way began to appear later in the story when she and St. Preux were discussing the meaning of God on which they were agreed—His Absolute Perfection. There was a thought deriving ultimately from Augustine, reasserted by Calvin, restated by Descartes, and most eloquently by Malebranche, and endorsed even by the questioning Bayle—that the very presence in our human consciousness, at the moment of realising its own defects of knowledge and power, of the idea of Perfect Being is utterly unaccountable save as the direct intimation from God Himself as the unique Being capable of causing such an effect.¹ The presence of God is directly known with the consciousness of human imperfection. Hence the belief in God is grounded on an immediate sentiment or consciousness. This conclusion had been heralded in the argument of the *Moral Letters*, but it was now definitely stated. More important, perhaps, than this result, however, was the implicating of the attribute of Power

¹ Cf. Bayle, *Continuation*, CXI, vol. iii, p. 342. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 3, pt. 2, ch. 6 ('We see all things in God').

with the Perfection of God—only because God is the absolute and supreme Power, the true cause of all activity, in matter or in mind, can His Being and Perfection be *known*. Then Julie and St. Preux were inclined to dispute with each other as to how definite the Perfections are, the latter following the philosophers like Malebranche who put them beyond all analogy with human mind and will, and saw the Providence as a general one manifest in the general laws of Nature, whereas Julie, more watchful of the individual's experience, neatly pointed out that the philosophers who deny a Providence that cares for persons individually are themselves only arguing from analogy; and from their own limited experience of mankind who can only be just by obeying general law, they conclude that God cannot be just in a very personal way: why is not a Supreme Power able to care for each and every soul in a way absolutely superior to the 'political' methods of men—much as Plato thought of the Statesman as above law and a wise and good shepherd? And if God's Providence be thus, God might be conceived to be in a direct relationship with every man and woman. And then, from that idea of an immediate touch of man and God as both spiritual beings, Julie went on to express a belief that there is an immediate communication of one human soul with another which death does not sever. These visions of Julie were a full swing toward mysticism in regard to the immortality of the soul and God. They amounted to the doctrine of personal revelation that pastor Vernes would have repudiated, since it allowed for no mediators and diminished the significance of the Scripture as the authentic revelation; but in Rousseau's fancy a true pastor gives that doctrine his blessing at the death-bed of Julie.¹ The Sixth Part of the *Julie* was the opening out of a faith in immortality and God, founded on the direct consciousness of a perfection and an active power which barely reveals itself to man and is beyond his full comprehension, yet not beyond his sense or sentiment. This was far from the philosophers, and from Helvétius' widely-noticed book, *De l'Esprit*. It was far, too, from the theological orthodoxy of Geneva, though not so far from the real views of the Protestant reformers and even the Port Royal thinkers who had gone back to the oldest expression of religious belief for their positions.

There had been no publicity about these various attempts at a profession of faith. They were all in the form of letters, and excepting *Julie*, were personal communications to Voltaire and to Vernes. Indeed, even the Sixth Part of *Julie* was first planned

¹ Rousseau was familiar with the doctrines of personal revelation in Marie Huber. See P. M. Masson, *La Formation religieuse de J.-J. Rousseau*, ch. 6, pp. 209-13.

for Mme d'Houdetot alone, like the *Moral Letters*, and its publication was for a time quite undecided. These pieces of writing were sincere and very personal. They represented the persistent and varied effort of a mind to satisfy itself about these important matters. Rousseau felt under a compulsion to put his thoughts and beliefs so effectively in the language of men that no words or philosophy could thereafter assail his convictions.

Those who were his close friends in the seclusion at Montmorency appreciated his genuinely religious sentiment and they naturally sought his fellowship when they, too, were brought into the presence of death. During the months of his hard labor on his comprehensive treatise on education, several such occasions arose, when his words were wanted and clung to by those who suffered some loss or other. His good old friend and countryman at Paris, Lenieps, was a Genevan of the old school who lived close to his family, in this instance, his daughter, her husband and their son, and who was wont to celebrate 'the escalade' with Rousseau religiously: he failed, however, to meet him as usual on December 12, 1759, because of the death of his little grandson, and received from Rousseau the following: 'Your first letter, my friend, gave me a presentiment of the misfortune that you announce to me in the second: I have felt your loss with the heart of a friend, and I have never felt so much regret that at this moment I should live so far away from you. If you were without your daughter, I should press you to come spend several days here, but I feel how much, on such an occasion, you have need the one of the other. Dear Lenieps, I would like my friendship to count for something to you. I never feel more attachment for my friends than when they have trouble; and unhappily, you were never so dear to me as this very moment. Adieu, my good friend: write me from time to time; I believe you have need of it, and I, too, need to have you write me.'¹ The Marshal de Luxembourg had troubles, too, for which he sought consolation, having lost a sister-in-law, and then suffering a heart-breaking worry over the rapidly declining health of his daughter: detained by official business at Court, he had recourse to letters to which Rousseau made sincere replies of consolation.² In January of 1760, his friend Vernes, whose nuptials he had blessed but a short year before, was bereft of his bride. Rousseau dared not breathe a word, in trying to console him, of the brief communion of those two souls, or suggest anything definite as to a future one, for he felt a certain

¹ To Lenieps, Dec. 17, 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 710.

² Correspondence with Luxembourg, Dec. 26, 1759, Nos. 715, 716; Mar. 16 to June 19, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, Nos. 759, 761, 773, 813.

constraint after their words about religion; but he stood beside his friend in sympathy: 'I know too well by experience that nothing consoles but time, and that often it is only added affliction to think that time will console us. Dear Vernes, one has not lost all when one can still weep. The regret over past happiness is a remnant of it. Blessed he who still has in the depths of his heart the one who was dear to him. . . .'¹ There was a genuine friendship for all who suffered, and a religious fellowship.

And the spirit of kindness reached back toward one who had once been more of a friend to him than any of these recent associates. On the day of writing his letter to Vernes, Rousseau, for what reason one can merely surmise, fell grieving over the fact that he no longer had Diderot. Perhaps he was that day revising his first version of the essay on the *Social Contract* whose second chapter brought up memories of the days when he and Diderot lived as brothers in argument as well as common pursuits; perhaps, in the contentment of finding himself at last achieving something of his own encyclopedic projects on education and politics, he felt sorry for Diderot who had given him the courage to speak for himself in the world of letters and was now cut off from the completion of his life's work, for the *Encyclopedia* had been stopped by official order. Whatever the occasion, he said to Vernes, with fervor: 'Oh, believe me, you do not know the most cruel way to lose a friend, and that is to have to mourn him whilst he still lives.'² Then it chanced that the libellous playwright, Palissot, who had once before been forgiven by Rousseau and rescued from D'Alembert's vengeance, had since adopted the policy, in view of Rousseau's break, of maligning Diderot in his comedy, *The Philosophers*, and praising Rousseau correspondingly. His publisher Duchesne sent Rousseau a complimentary copy, thinking to please him. The reply that came back was indignant: 'Sir, in running through the piece you have sent me I am horrified to see myself praised there. I do not accept that horrible present. I am persuaded that in sending it to me you had no intention of insulting me; but you are not aware, or you have forgotten, that I have had the honor of being the friend of a respected man who is unworthily blackened and calumniated in that libel.'³

Persecution, through authority or opinion, always brought those men of the *Encyclopedia* together again in mutual aid. Abbé Morellet came out defending Diderot in *The Vision of Charles Palissot*, incidentally giving offence to one Mme Robeck,

¹ To Vernes, Feb. 9, 1760, No. 746.

² Op. cit., p. 46.

³ To Duchesne, Mar. 21, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 788; cf. Letter to Rey, June 8, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 804.

for which cause he was thrown into the Bastille. D'Alembert at once rushed word to Rousseau as one able to secure the intercession of Mme de Luxembourg for his release. And Rousseau straightway responded to this call, and with success.¹ This action tended to place him once again in the public view, alongside 'the philosophers'. He acted sheerly from generous impulse and justice; but the inferences likely to be drawn were neither true nor safe—he was not one of that circle in the matter of religion, and he was anxious not to be known as such.

For a startling piece of news had come on June 13, 1760. Abbé Trublet wrote from Paris informing him that a *Letter to Voltaire* on the subject of Providence was out in a journal edited by Formey, Secretary of the Royal Society at Berlin, who professed to have found it in pamphlet form among bookshops and thought it proper to put it out in more permanent form. This was most disquieting news, especially as Voltaire had never consented to publication and would probably hold him accountable for it. Abbé Trublet went on to tell that Formey who was a 'religionist' had not found Rousseau sufficiently religious, because his views seemed to permit suicide and definitely rejected Hell. It was bad enough to have this first attempt at a profession of faith come out, but apparently this unauthorised version was entirely misrepresenting his beliefs. He hurried a message to his own publisher Rey, asking him to make all possible inquiries as to the source of Formey's copy. Meantime he addressed himself to Voltaire to explain all he knew about the case, and tell precisely what persons had received copies from himself, namely, Mme Dupin, Mme d'Houdetot, and 'a German named Grimm'. He made it clear, too, that he, no more than Voltaire, now wanted that letter published. But he made a proposal, in view of the fact that this spurious, or at least unauthorised, version was on the market, that they themselves should print the original letter and include with it any reply whatsoever Voltaire now chose to write; and as if goading him on to it, he followed that proposal with a frank statement of his opinion about Voltaire, that he liked him not, even hated him, for making Geneva an impossible place for him; adding, however, that he had always admired his genius and pen and was once a disciple and enthusiast. No reply came from Voltaire. He then appealed to Malesherbes the censor, asking him to refuse to allow the letter to be reprinted in France from the Berlin copy, and was told in reply that the censor had no authority to prevent such reprinting and advised that his only recourse was to publish the original himself. Steps were taken to this end,

¹ To D'Alembert, about July 15, 1760, *ibid.*, No. 840.

but on June 30 the publisher to whom it had been submitted, Guérin, a friend and neighbor at Montmorency, sent back the copy, regretting that he could not undertake its publication: 'I don't believe the magistrate would be willing to take upon himself the permission to print it here: the consequences are too serious in a country such as this. Our theologians are terrible people; and since they get after the clergy often enough for other things they give them, to appease their dolorous cries, some satisfactions of which, as your servant and your friend, I wish you might never be the object.'¹

Sentiment was indeed growing against 'the philosophers'. Abbé Trublet who was liberal-minded himself wrote: 'It is very ill that M. de Voltaire has so often made such bad use of his talents against religion. He and some others of your old friends would appear to me to be very much at fault in that respect, and it is a point that you yourself have well made in your letters to MM. d'A(lembert) and V(oltaire). After him, M. Diderot is most to blame, and it is without doubt he who has betrayed your trust in so many things.'² This was an unwelcome inference, which Rousseau could not honestly allow. It was aligning him with the pious in their attack on Diderot.

His position had thus suddenly become intolerably ambiguous, now a philosopher going to the rescue of one of them in the Bastille, again a religionist, author of the *Letter to D'Alembert* and the *Letter to Voltaire*. He felt that he belonged to neither one nor the other 'party'. It was imperative that he show where he stood, since there was nothing before the public of all that he had conceived or put on paper except this Berlin version of his *Letter to Voltaire*. A great deal had transpired in his thinking since 1756 when he had composed it. And in justice to himself it was now necessary to gather his thought together for a final effort of statement. It was probably in that summer of 1760, then, that he made the definitive formulation of his beliefs, working as one inspired, and regardless of all considerations of health. Regardless of safety, too, for his discourse (which was taking the form of a conversation of a vicar of Savoy, like those he remembered from his youth) fitted so happily into the scheme of his treatise on education, since it was a giving of religious instruction, that it was actually incorporated in the *Émile*. This took courage, in view of the advice given him by his publisher, and the general course of events in the intellectual world.

¹ From Guérin, June 30, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 826. The correspondence, relating to this whole affair of the *Letter to Voltaire* is in Nos. 806, 807, 810, 811, 815, 816, 817, 818, 821, 827, 830.

² From Abbé Trublet, June 21, 1760, *op. cit.*, No. 815.

He was in truth of neither contemporary party. He was affiliated, rather, with that circle of fine spirits, the thinkers of the earlier modern period, great in its religion and philosophy, in whose thoughts he had instructed himself at several critical times in his life. The members of this spiritual circle who were his masters believed very different things, and believed firmly, but yet they were tolerant as they reasoned, each against the other, in their various treatises on 'nature and grace'. There were the reforming writers of Port Royal whose leader Arnauld had challenged Malebranche of the Oratoire; there were the Cartesians, Leibniz, and Clarke, honorable in their controversy over Newton's world and theodicy, whose opposite views were published as a model of fairness, presented side by side in a collection, a thing Rousseau aspired, perhaps, to emulate when he offered Voltaire the opportunity to publish a new reply to his *Letter* in one and the same book. And there was the fair-minded Bayle generous in his appreciation of all the others in that century of argument, of Pascal, Arnauld, Malebranche, Leibniz, whilst he himself presented a most alluring union of the scepticism of Montaigne and Charron with the Calvinism of his faith. Bayle was, perhaps, the person toward whom Rousseau felt most sympathetic because of his alternative impulses of negative rationalism and mysticism. Yet Bayle had found a basis for belief in the Cartesian dualism, although he ascribed the final decision on any belief to the sentiment and will. Those modern thinkers, together with Plato and Plutarch had been, most of them, the instructors of Rousseau's youth at Les Charmettes. Their ideas had formed the 'magazine of knowledge' on which he later came to draw when, escaping the hectic contemporaneity of Parisian arts and letters, he retired to the country. Then those old eloquent personages became truly his associates. The *Profession of Faith* was an allegiance to those 'old ideas', and its argument had the form sometimes of a Cartesian 'meditation' or a 'conversation' like those of Malebranche, sometimes of a discourse like Samuel Clarke's *Demonstration of the Existence and Attributes of God*; still other times a querying, in the manner of the 'thoughts' of Bayle. Fervor, eloquence, serenity, scruple, doubt, all made the piece one of strange effect from moment to moment, but the whole had the convincing impression of a belief that is at once the outcropping of a religious tradition and the individual's own achievement of thought.

As elsewhere in *Émile*, the true ideas are the 'primary and most common' and 'the most simple and reasonable'. Philosophers usually discover them last, partly because they are so

proud of being different, and partly because of the insufficiency of the human mind for such matters.¹ They tried out many varieties of materialism before 'the illustrious Clarke' caught the public attention with what appeared to be a fine new system, but was in reality just the announcement, in a form that reasoning age could understand, of an age-old truth about the Being of all beings. Any one who is anxious, puzzled, or uncertain about truth can rediscover it for himself, simply by attending to the sentiments of nature within him and following the natural order of his own ideas. This is all Rousseau himself professed to be doing in this discourse.

The first truth is: 'I exist and I have senses by which I am affected.' A question arises: is this primary sense of my own existence due to a distinct 'sentiment of myself' or simply the outcome of the sensations themselves; in other words, is there an 'internal sense', in the language of Locke, besides the 'external senses'? It is impossible to answer this from the immediate evidence and to set up any such distinction, for I am continually affected by the senses, and by memories derived from them, and consequently I am never aware of my own existence apart from them. However, a cause of the sensations is *felt* as something quite distinct from them, because my sensations occur despite myself and can be neither made nor destroyed—as Locke had described it. Accordingly, I do quite clearly distinguish between my sensations and their cause or object without me. Hence other things certainly do exist for me besides myself and these are the objects of the sensations, and causes foreign to me which act on my senses. They are called in general, 'matter', and when portions of matter are united in individual beings, 'bodies'. This discrimination of the body from the sensitive being is entirely natural to the human understanding as 'the sage Locke' had patiently showed by adhering to his 'historical plain method' in the study of ideas and language. Such common sense banned all the philosophic doubts and niceties as to whether body were an appearance or reality—the 'material universe' exists just as truly as do I myself. And this is the outcome of the first meditation.²

Looking to the objects of my world I find myself able to compare them, and so realise that I am endowed with an active force which I have not appreciated before in my experience of passive sensation. To compare is to do more than feel; it is to judge, which means, to take things which are given separately and isolated and put them together and change them around

¹ Cf. Malebranche on the pride of opinion in the erudite, and love of novelties,—*Recherche*, bk. 2, pt. 2, chs. 4 and 6.

² *Emile*, H., vol. ii, pp. 240–1; Malebranche begins thus in his *Recherche* with *The Senses*.

and then pronounce them to be alike or different in certain respects. This pronouncement is something a being who had merely sensitivity could never make. It is, indeed, the distinguishing feature of an *intelligent* being that he can give active meaning to the word 'is'. Though sensations furnish the occasion, the intellect alone makes any judgments of existence. Thus Locke and Malebranche, who were otherwise so much at odds, both declared that the relations of things are not directly given in sensation but are disclosed by the work of the mind itself. This activity of the mind involves a liability to mistake, and so these philosophers had given men instructions as to 'The Conduct of the Understanding' and the 'Search for Truth'. Rousseau, for his part, preferred to put his faith in sentiment rather than in any intellectual method, because the veritable act of reason is only a returning to the first sense of things. This fundamental act had been called various names, meditation, (Descartes), reflexion (Locke), attention (Malebranche), but the name is a matter of indifference. And the outcome of these reflections is that I now have an enhanced sense of myself: I know I am active, that is, a being capable of doing something.¹

When man feels his own importance and begins to exercise his active intelligence, there suddenly comes upon him the religious feeling that Pascal and others had known: 'I am lost in the vast universe, as one drowned in the immensity of beings, without knowing anything of what they are, either in relation to each other or to myself.' Having only myself to start with I am poorly equipped for taking the measure of so vast a thing. It is possible, of course, to deduce by thought, as Descartes had done, the essential qualities of matter from the sensible qualities which are directly perceived, by fixing on those that are causal and inseparable from each other. But there is one quite universal aspect of the material order which is not explained, the movement of matter. Sometimes it is in motion, sometimes at rest. Neither rest nor motion seems really essential to matter. Yet there must be some positive meaning to this aspect of the world and it is something for reflection to discover. Now motion is familiar as communicated to a body by a cause from without and also as voluntary or spontaneous within the body itself. Inanimate bodies show the communicated motion, but animals appear to exhibit what seems to be spontaneous movement. But here a question arises: do I know the reality of the spontaneous activity? 'I know it because I feel it. I want to move my arms and I move them without any other immediate cause

¹ *Émile*, pp. 241-2; cf. Leibniz: *Théodicée, Œuvres*, vol. vi, p. 308, Gebhardt ed.; Malebranche, op. cit., bk. 1, chs. 2-3, *Méditations chrétiennes*, Méd. 2.

but my will. It is in vain that one would reason me out of that feeling, for it is stronger than all evidence; it is just like trying to prove to me that I do not exist.' And if there were not this direct sense of activity in himself man would be utterly at a loss how to conceive of a 'first cause of all motion'. There is one alternative conception, but it is without sense: 'My mind refuses to acquiesce at all in the idea of unorganised matter moving of itself, or producing any action whatsoever.' For the matter of the universe plainly consists of dead and scattered parts without any unity, organisation, and common feeling, such as a living body has. It is a universe in motion, yet, in those movements it is so regular, so uniform, so subject to constant laws that nothing whatsoever of liberty appears in it. The world cannot even be considered a great animal, self-moving in the manner the ancients had fancied. But motion is there, and it must have a cause. This was a point on which Bayle had insisted, therein following Calvin and Malebranche.¹ Now, having the 'inner persuasion' of voluntary motion within myself, it is simply inevitable that I shall think of a will behind the universal motion. True, there may be laws of the world still unknown to us, but even so, by experience and observation, we become acquainted only with the laws of the effects, and in any scientific account whether it be that of Newton or Descartes, the laws of motion never reveal the causes of the motion. These causes the mind must nevertheless seek, and above them all severally, their first cause, for an infinite regress means getting nothing at all in the search for a cause. So 'it is necessary always to go back to some will for the first cause. . . . That is my first principle. Thus I believe a will moves the universe and animates nature. There is my first dogma, or my first article of faith.'²

This is supposed by Rousseau to be the natural judgment of every mind which contemplates its own situation. And it was, in fact, an old belief of mankind, variously repeated by the reflective thinkers of the ages, Plato, Aristotle (on the Prime Mover), Cicero in his *On the Nature of the Gods*, which was itself a masterly summary of the ancient tradition; then among the moderns, Descartes and Locke, when they used the 'cosmological' argument to a First Cause.³ But some writers had been more doubtful, like Malebranche who was cautious about all such 'natural judgments' without the light of reason. Bayle had

¹ Bayle, *Continuation*, XXI, vol. iii, p. 217 n.; CIV, pp. 323-30; CXI, pp. 340-1; on Calvin in article, *Epicurus*, *Dictionnaire*, vol. ii, p. 789; Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 1, ch. xvi ('God's Preservation and Support of the World by Power'), pp. 186 ff.; Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 20; ch. 10; Méd. 5.

² *Emile*, pp. 242-4.

³ Cf. Aristotle, *De motu animalium*, ed. Farquharson, 698a-699a.

gone over and over the argument, somewhat worried by the difficulty of excluding the counter, naturalistic position.¹ Most positive of all on this point was Samuel Clarke, the champion of Newton and a masterly dialectician, who definitely proved by abstract reason that the idea of motion as essential to matter is absurd.² Those difficulties and the decisive solution of Clarke were next traced by Rousseau. How does a will produce a physical and bodily action? The question was that of Malebranche, doubtful whether man really understands himself so clearly as Descartes had pretended, particularly as to the causation of his own will. In a certain sense Rousseau agreed, but he made capital of the admission by Malebranche of a primary intimation of such causal agency, since otherwise it would have no meaning at all for man. 'I know nothing of it; but I experience in myself the fact that the will produces the action. . . . I am acquainted with that will as a moving cause. . . .'³ And there is no such direct acquaintance of matter causing itself to move, so that if we believe it we are simply conceiving the effect without any notion of the cause, which, as Clarke had argued, is tantamount to having no knowledge whatsoever concerning the whole affair. This leaves us with the conception of the will alone as a true cause. And as regards the difficulty, which is real enough, of our conceiving how any will causes action, that is to be viewed as one case of a general problem of mind and body, since the Cartesian philosophy had discovered an equal difficulty in understanding how anything can affect the senses and cause the soul to have sensations. The whole question of the union of soul and body is shrouded in mystery. Yet no one need disabuse himself on that account of the belief that his will acts, any more than of the belief that he receives sensations from elsewhere—both these are immediate experiences.

¹ Bayle, *Continuation*, VII, vol. iii, p. 197: XCI, pp. 317-18; CIV-CXI, pp. 330-42, Malebranche; *Méditations chrétiennes*, Méd. 6, sect. 6. *Œuvres*, ed. J. Simon, vol. iii, p. 65: 'ne juge jamais à l'égard des effets naturels, qu'une chose soit l'effet d'une autre, à cause que l'expérience t'apprend qu'elle ne manque jamais de la suivre.' One might be led to conclude—'qu'il n'y a point de mouvement ou de changement dans le monde, ou bien que tous ces changements n'ont point de cause qui les produise, ni de sagesse qui les règle'. Méd. 9, sect. 3, p. 111.

² Cf. Clarke, *A Demonstration*, Prop. II, pp. 11-14, Prop. III, Fourth Result, pp. 21-30.

³ *Émile*, p. 244. See Malebranche: 'Tu ne découvriras jamais de rapport entre la volonté des intelligences et les moindres effets. Je ne donne point aux hommes d'idée distincte qui réponde au mot de puissance ou d'efficace, parce que Dieu n'a point donné de puissance véritable aux créatures', Méd. 9, p. 110. Then sect. 18, p. 119: 'Tu connais que tu es, et que tu es pensant, aimant, souffrant, parce que tu as le sentiment intérieur de ton être et de ses modifications, sentiment confus qui te frappe, mais encore un coup, sentiment sans lumière qui ne peut t'éclairer, sentiment qui ne peut t'apprendre ce que tu es, ni servir à résoudre les difficultés qui t'embarrassent.' Cf. Méd. I, sect. 26, pp. 15-16; Méd. 2, sect. 1, p. 17.

And the inference drawn with regard to the first cause of the motion or activities of the universe and will, while it may be obscure and hard to define, is still nowise repugnant to reason or observation, and that much could not be said of the opposite materialism. For if motion were essential to matter, it would be inseparable therefrom, and exist always in the same degree and quantity, which is contrary to fact and to reason, as Leibniz had, in fact, shown,¹ in arguing against the Cartesian doctrine of the conservation of motion. When the materialists shift ground and say that motion is not essential but *necessary*, they are only quibbling with words and introducing abstract ideas, ever the source of major errors, as Locke amply demonstrated. 'It may well be that the mechanism of the whole world is not intelligible to the human mind, but when a man once undertakes to explain it, he must speak of things men can understand.'² Now an agent with a will as the cause of motion is certainly understandable.

Another conviction has been coming to light in the midst of these reflections. The moving of matter according to certain laws bespeaks an agency that directs, an intelligence. Admit that man may be ignorant of the grand end of the world, still he discerns, in what is plainly open to his view, an order. He is familiar with the relationship and cooperation of all the parts. Though he can never answer why the universe exists, he can still appreciate a fitness in what is there. 'Compare the particular ends, the means, the ordered relationships of all sorts, then listen to the internal feeling; what sane mind can refuse its testimony? Does not the order of the universe of which we are thus sensible, announce to every unprejudiced eye, a supreme intelligence?'³ The philosophers may talk of their chances infinite, of organised bodies accidentally formed from the unorganised—it is all talk. Where is their evidence of the partly or ill-formed attempts that strew the way to the order now obtaining? Can the printer's letters all at a hazard be possibly conceived to yield so fine a thing as the *Aeneid*—repeating a query of the Stoics which had already been so many times repeated in the annals of philosophy? Or the more recent question of Leibniz and others may be put: Can the organisation of life be the result of the interplay of atoms?⁴ Naturalists such as Nieuentyt will often marvel at the details of life only to fail to be impressed by the greatest marvel of all, the harmony and accord in the whole

¹ Leibniz, *Nouveau Système de l'union de l'âme et du corps*.

² *Émile*, p. 245.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 246; cf. Clarke, Prop. VIII, p. 54; Prop. IX, p. 62.

⁴ Fénelon, *Traité de l'existence et des attributs de Dieu*, ed. Jacques, ch. 3, p. 76. Malebranche, a student of vision, dwelt on the purpose shown in the eye: 'cela est si évident que c'est plutôt une témérité fort ridicule, que d'assurer que c'est le hasard qui arrange de cette sorte les parties du corps.' Méd. 11, p. 135.

system. 'The very generation of living and organised bodies is the abyss of the human mind; the insurmountable barrier nature has put between the divers species, in order that they might not be confounded one with another, all this shows her intentions with a finality of evidence.'¹

These reflections seem to have been aimed at Diderot who speculated on the idea of an origin of species by transformation, and from that thought of development of things apparently so distinct as the known species, was advancing to contradict Leibniz to the effect that life itself may not be so distinct from the inorganic as it appears to be, and thence, of course, to the notion which most outraged Rousseau's sentiments, that the being of intelligence is no more distinct from the others than they are from each other, so that Maupertuis might be right in his suggestion that matter may in every instance have consciousness or perception. That the universe is an organic thing Rousseau was willing enough to admit, but he drew a conclusion very different from theirs: 'There is no being in the universe that one cannot, in some respect, consider as the common centre of all the others, and about which they are all ordered, in such wise that they are all reciprocally ends and means with reference to others. The mind gets confused and lost in that infinity of relationships, of which not one is itself actually confounded or lost in the whole mass. But what absurd suppositions this makes when they deduce all that harmony from a blind mechanism of matter moved by chance! Those who deny the unity of intention that shows itself in the relations of all the parts of this great whole do well to cover their nonsense with abstractions, coordinations, general principles, symbolic terms; however they construe it, for me it is impossible not to conceive an intelligence which orders it all. It does not depend on me whether or not to believe that passive and dead matter can have produced living and thinking being, that a blind fate can have produced intelligent beings, that that which does not think can have produced beings who think.'²

Many theoretical questions may be raised as to whether the world is eternal or created, whether it has one principle or many, and what their nature may be; but these cannot be solved theoretically. When they make some difference to practical living, the mind will apply itself and reach a conclusion that has some meaning. So far the truth of vital importance is this: that a will

¹ *Emile*, p. 247; cf. Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée*, *Philosophische Schriften*, ed. Gebhardt, vol. vi, p. 42.

² *Emile*, p. 247; cf. Locke, *Essay*, bk. 4, ch. 6, sect. 11; ch. 10, sects. 5 and 10-11. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 5, ch. 1, p. 434 'Nous sommes unis en quelque manière à tout l'univers. . . .'

and intelligence is active in the world as the source of motion and order. Will and Intelligence define primarily the Being whom men call God. And it is a necessary implication of their ultimate character that God should be conceived as Perfect Goodness as well. Beyond these ideas of Intelligence and Will and Perfection the mind gets lost, not knowing where God is, nor what He is, nor what is His Substance.

As so often in the literature of religious thought, the mind, after attaining to the idea of God, falls back reflectively in thought about itself. What manner of being am I and what place have I in the order of things? As to species, first place, because I am a being most like God in my active nature and intelligence. For it is a great thing—and the language is that of Calvin and Augustine, ‘to know how to observe all other creatures, to measure, to calculate, to foresee their movements, their effects, and to join, as it were, the sense of a common existence to that of one’s individual existence’. Man is monarch, too, of all that he thus surveys, disposing of the fruits of the earth by his industry and invention. He knows the order, the beauty, the virtue of things; he loves the good and can do good, as great in his power of conscience as in intellect. It is right, and heartening, to believe thus in the worth and goodness of man by virtue of these high endowments. The first sentiment that comes is one of gratitude and blessing for the beneficent Author of mankind. A natural adoration of Him comes over man, who needs not be taught by others this fundamental religious sentiment.¹

So much for man in general and as seen in his relation with an Almighty, Wise and Good God. But man as he is seen among men is another picture. Man the individual dwells in an unlovely disorder, lack of harmony and confusion—these were the ‘sad reflections’ on which Rousseau had spent so much time in his earlier *Discourses*. Evil is now on the scene. What shall we make of it?

This forces one to the view that the nature of man has two distinct principles within it. One lifts him up to the study of the ‘eternal verities’, and to the love of justice and beauty as well as truth, and that is Plato’s principle of the soul, the part of man related to God. The other principle sends him into himself, subjecting him to his own senses and passions, and opposing the activities of the soul. Man is not one individual being—Pascal had dwelt on that with most profound feeling. Man is at once slave and free. He wants the good and does it not; he is active and master when he hearkens to reason, but he also yields to

¹ *Émile*, pp. 248–9; cf. Calvin, bk. 1, ch. 5 (‘Knowledge of God’), pp. 61–2; ch. 15 (‘State of Man at Creation’), pp. 171–2.

passion, and when he thus succumbs he suffers all the more because he feels that he has all along been able to resist it. He is, then, a being of conscience, yet scarcely ever of good conscience. His moral life shows him motivated by two innate or natural tendencies, one to prefer himself to all others, the other to hold to justice. Both principles are always at work. In the light of all such evidences of a duality man cannot be regarded as simply one 'substance'.¹

But the meaning of 'substance' itself calls for some consideration. The term refers to a 'being endowed with some primitive quality' apart from any particular modifications. In the present instance it means the 'natural man', the conception of which Rousseau had sought to define in his earlier writings. And he has now reached his objective after much fighting against the opposite thoughts of his philosophic friends. They were trying to reduce all to the one principle of body, and in their project were willing even to say 'that trees feel and rocks think'. Their argument depreciated thinking as a quality appropriate to man and took away all the meaning of thought. Nature, for them, was peopled only with sensitive beings. Nowhere were there any individuals, any beings with that 'unity of sensibility' which makes a self. Indeed, the materialistic argument, to be consequential, ought even to deny the existence of such units of feeling, but the philosophers stopped short at that in their course of reducing everything to matter. They were obsessed with the physical, and were like men who reason from the point of view of the deaf—again a thrust at Diderot—against the reality of music. 'They are simply deaf themselves to the internal voice which cries to them in a tone which it is hard to misunderstand: "A machine does not think at all; there is neither any movement nor figure which produces reflection in it; but something within thee seeks to shatter the bonds that confine thee: space is not thy measure, the universe entire is not great enough for thee: thy feelings, thy desires, thy inquietudes, and even thy pride have another principle besides that straitened body, within which thou feelest thyself enchanted." ' While no other being is active, man is, and he knows it by immediate feeling. He feels, likewise, the existence of his body, as acting and acted upon by other bodies. His will, too, is something quite distinguishable from his senses: it is a power in him to consent or resist, a power that is not obliterated by its own defeat, for it still shows itself in the reproach a person directs at himself for any weakness. Man knows his own will in the sentiment he has of it, and in point of fact his understanding is not known in any

¹ Ibid., pp. 249-50.

other way. If they declare, then, there must be a cause determining my will, the retort may be made by asking what cause it is that determines their own judgment. For all judgment is itself an activity of man, a power of will. The human understanding is just the power freely to compare and judge. And liberty of will is that same active inherent power which man exhibits in making choice of his deeds. He chooses the good exactly as he judges the true. In both cases 'the determining cause is in himself'.¹ But they say this self-determining cause is not really freedom. 'Does it follow that I am not my own master because I am not master of being other than myself?' A freedom to be oneself is sufficient freedom for any one, and it has a real meaning. Indeed, 'it is not the word freedom that signifies nothing, but necessity', for to suppose there can be an effect or act without an active principle is to think of an effect without a cause, and thus fall into the vicious circle which Clarke had clearly demonstrated. A new truth has thus emerged: 'Man is free therefore in his actions, and as such, he is animated by a substance that is immaterial—that is my third article of faith.'²

This leads to a solution of the long-standing problem of evil. If man is active, whatever he does must be attributed to himself as the cause, and not reckoned in the 'system ordained of Providence'. His actions are to be imputed to himself, never to God. Otherwise it would mean that he is not really a free agent. Of course, one is sometimes tempted to think that a better order of things might have been devised where man would not be able to abuse his powers or do what is evil; but this could only be at the price of his own freedom and of a lowering in the scale of being, as without any real likeness to the Supreme Will and Mind. It seems, then, a wiser Providence in the present system, which confers on persons a responsibility for their own lives and adds to the glory of their achievement. 'Man has been made free in order that he shall do no evil, but good, by his own choice.' This was a reconciliation which Malebranche had made of human liberty with Providence; and he also had pointed out what Rousseau next repeated, that the abuse of man's liberty 'never can trouble the general order' since the laws of the Universe always obtain, whatever man may do,³ and so the deeds

¹ *Émile*, p. 251; cf. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 1, ch. 1; bk. 3, ch. 7.

² *Émile*, pp. 251-2; Clarke, Props. VIII-IX, pp. 48-62, and Leibniz, Part I of *Théodicée, des essais de la justice de Dieu, et de la liberté de l'homme, dans l'origine du mal*, sect. 50, Gebhardt ed., vol. vi, p. 130; see Diderot's remark in the letter to Landois, June 1756 (vol. xix, p. 436), that 'liberty is a word devoid of sense', and Grimm's eulogy of the letter. (*Corr. Litt.*, vol. iii, pp. 292 ff.) Likewise Helvétius, *De l'Esprit, Œuvres complètes*, vol. i, p. 35.

³ Malebranche, *Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce*; T. Taylor, 1694, pp. 4, 27. *Méditations*, Méd. 7, sect. 14, pp. 85-6, 89.

of man affect only his own human order. 'The ill that man does returns upon himself without changing anything in the system of the world, without even preventing the human species from perpetuating itself despite all evil.' The whole arrangement is best in every way, endowing man with reason as well as brute instinct and making him rise to morality as an achievement, and thereby enabling him to experience the supreme joy of life, 'contentment with oneself'. The possibility of being free and good and happy in such wise is one of being as nearly like God as man could ever dream.¹

When man abuses the liberty of action which he enjoys by divine dispensation, he commits evil. Moral evil is all his own doing. Physical ills would not be *felt as evil* apart from the human vices themselves. Pain is actually a means of self-preservation by making us feel our own needs, and it naturally propels us to the satisfaction of our needs which thus become an object of attention.² Death is not an evil. It puts a term to these ills of man that are all self-wrought. It is not felt as evil save by those who are never content with life anyhow but must ever look forward for their good, to something beyond the present. In a primitive simplicity life is enjoyed at every moment and death has no importance. An excessive imagining and attention to well-being poisons the sense of present existence. On every count, then, it is man himself who appears to be the real author of all he accounts evil. And that evil, too, is always particular to himself and his feeling. There is no 'general evil' in the world at large, for that could consist only of 'disorder' which is obviously not the fact. Apart, therefore, from man's own pretence to progress, with all the crime and vice associated therewith—'all is good'.

Where all is good, there is nothing unjust. 'Justice is inseparable from goodness; but goodness is the necessary result of a power without limits, and of the love of oneself, essential to every sentient being. . . . He who can do all, can will only that which is good. So the Being sovereignly good, because He is sovereignly powerful, must also be sovereignly just. . . .'³

A new meaning of Providence emerges from this inference. If God is just, then God 'owes something to his creatures. I believe he owes them all he promised them in giving them being. But it is to promise them a good to give them the idea of it and make them conscious of the need of it. The more I enter into

¹ *Émile*, pp. 252-3.

² Cf. Malebranche, *Méd.* 10, sect. 17, p. 130. 'L'ordre veut que tu sois averti par la preuve courte mais incontestable du sentiment de ce que tu dois faire pour conserver la vie. . . .'

³ *Émile*, p. 253; cf. Clarke, *Prop.* XII, pp. 106-18.

myself, and consult myself, the more I see these words written in my soul: *Be just and thou wilt be happy.*'

The promise can be fulfilled, too, despite appearances in this world to the contrary, because the soul of man is immaterial and distinct from the body, as Plato had conceived, and is therefore capable of surviving it and regaining a pristine vigor when divested of the connection with such passive and dead matter. We do not know what life is, or whether the soul by very nature is immortal. The notions of infinity and eternity, as Locke and Clarke had said, escape one's comprehension. All one can say is that the soul must survive enough for the 'maintenance of the order' of God—again a Platonic thought. One can see how it happens that bodies are destroyed, but not what happens to a thinking being, and the presumption is strong, therefore, against any such destruction of the soul. The thought is not unreasonable and naturally turns into a belief.¹

One must follow experience in thinking about these things. 'I am aware of my soul, I am acquainted with it both by feeling and thought; I know that it *is*, without knowing *what* is its essence.' Now as Locke put it, the identity of the self is only prolonged by memory. So the soul in its surviving must be thought of as remembering its life and what it has felt and done. This gives a clue to the meaning of a future felicity for the good and a torment for the wicked—the bliss and the penalty are precisely memories of the past in the mind itself, which is more attentive to them when delivered of the body and its sensual passions that ordinarily 'absorb the inner sentiment and conceal remorse'. The good spirits will enjoy the contemplation of the Supreme Being and eternal truths, and be smitten with heavenly beauties and led to compare what they had done with what they ought to have done—conscience being then the supreme power in the heart of man, and yielding a corresponding joy, in contentment with oneself. Whether heaven and hell can mean anything more than this it is impossible to tell. No happiness, surely, can excel that of 'existing in accordance with one's own nature'. And it is hard to believe in the 'eternity of punishment', when there is such present torment in the heart of the wicked. Pure spirits cannot continue to need chastisement, for, being without wants, they can have no new passions or crimes, but will seek 'all their happiness in the contemplation of things that are' and intend to do nothing that is not good—and so, their wickedness having ceased, why, also, should not their punishment?

But the sinner's argument here ceased, too, for he remembered,

¹ *Emile*, pp. 253-4; cf. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 4, ch. 2, sect. 4, pp. 349-50.

humbly, that he was in no position to give the law to God's righteousness. The mood passed from that of argument to prayer: 'Oh clement and good Being. Whatever be Thy decrees, I adore them: if Thou punishest the wicked eternally, I make my feeble reason as nothing before Thy Justice; but if it comes to pass that the remorse of these unfortunates shall be blotted out with time, if their ills shall end, and if the same peace shall await us all alike one day, I praise Thee for all that. The wicked man, is he not my brother? How often have I not been tempted to be like him. Oh, make it come to pass, then, that delivered of his misery, he will also lose the malignity that accompanies it, that he may be happy as I myself. Far from arousing my jealousy, his happiness will only add to my own.'¹ So it is that the belief in God's forgiveness leads man to forgive his fellow—and this was for Rousseau an injunction laid upon him by his own conscience regarding Diderot.

Such questions as to one's own duty are more clearly solved than those as to the attributes of God, which become increasingly difficult for man to determine. Some truths have been discovered concerning God—His Immensity as a Power, His Intelligence, and His Perfect Goodness which has now been vindicated against evil. But the full essence of this Being manifest in these three attributes cannot be conceived.² He is an active power absolutely different from anything bodily. His thinking baffles us, so that it even demeans God to call him a Spirit and liken him to man's mind. As Malebranche had taught in this matter, God is 'the only absolute Being, the only one truly active, feeling, thinking, willing of His own accord, and the Being from Whom we have thought, feeling, activity, will, freedom, being. We are only free because He wills that we shall be so, and His inexplicable substance is to our souls what our souls are to our bodies. Whether He has created matter, bodies, minds, the world, I do not know. This idea of creation confounds me and passes my comprehension. I believe in it, as much as I can conceive it, for I do know this, that He has formed the universe and all that there exists, that He has made all and ordered all. And, no doubt, God is eternal, but my mind, can it really embrace the idea of eternity? Why pay myself with words without ideas? All I can think is that He is before all things, that He will be as long as they subsist, and that He will be beyond that, if some day all comes to an end.' As for the Supreme Intelligence, that must be conceived as 'purely intuitive', without employing any of the means of sense or reasoning. And His Intelligence is nowise distinct from His

¹ *Émile*, pp. 255-6.

² Cf. Clarke, *Prop. V*, p. 38.

Will—here again man knows nothing of so perfect a mind. As for the Goodness of God that can only be represented as a kind of justice, not like man's justice, which consists in rendering others their dues, but a justice that requires every one to give a full account of himself. These are the attributes, which can all be derived by the necessity of reason, but they are not comprehended. 'In vain do I say: God is thus and so; I feel that it is so, I prove it to myself; but I am no better off in the way of conceiving how God can be so.' The more one presses on to contemplate this 'infinite essence', the less one becomes capable of conceiving it. It is enough to know the existence of the Infinite Being and to adore Him and be humble before Him.¹

That language echoed Malebranche and Calvin and the writers of the seventeenth century who had to justify their faith before the court of metaphysics. And those men had been moral reformers, too, as anxious to vindicate the conscience of man as to teach the Word of God. From the same general movement of thought came the deists who published a religion, not of a Book, but of Nature, and who considered it sufficient worship of God for man to perform his plain, moral duties to his fellow-man. Rousseau was drawing his ideas from the reformed tradition, from its heresies as well as its orthodoxies, and consequently his profession includes a vindication of the moral consciousness, whose deliverances are maxims with a plain and practical meaning. A faith ought to face thus in the direction of practice, and not become lost in a metaphysics of essence and attributes.

Like all veritable principles, the moral maxims of life are known directly and without any elaborate philosophy. 'I have only to consult myself as to what I want to do: all that I feel to be good is good, all that I feel to be bad is bad.' In those sentiments of good and evil there is conscience, and it is a very real factor. The interest in one's own well-being is a natural and fundamental sentiment, and yet, whenever man is moved by this impulse of nature to seek some good for himself at another's cost, an 'inner voice' is heard and a resistance to the impulse arises. This, too, is natural. It is the voice of the soul amidst the passions, the voices of the body. As instinct is the guide of the body—and incidentally Rousseau argued vigorously for instinct, that it is not to be explained away merely as acquired knowledge—so the guide of the soul is conscience, and 'whoever follows it, obeys nature, and need never fear going astray'.²

Here was an 'important point' and it had been attacked by

¹ *Émile*, pp. 256-7; cf. Malebranche, *Recherche*, bk. 3, pt. 2, ch. 9, p. 322.

² *Émile*, pp. 257-8.

Rousseau's associates who had very different views about following Nature and the significance of conscience. So he used the argument against their philosophy which he had already developed in the *Moral Letters*. When man does not feel his personal interest to be at stake he is naturally inclined toward the happiness of others and not to their misery. It is pleasanter to do what is good for them than what is evil. At the theatre one has no pleasure simply in wickedness itself nor in the punishments suffered therefor. Let them say what they will about man's being indifferent to all else but his own personal interest—what about the delights of friendship and humanity that are so consoling to him in trouble and so necessary, in even his pleasures? How does it happen that men feel an admiration for heroic action, often at the distance of centuries when they could never by any trick of imagination see any advantage for themselves in such deeds? The disinterested love of the beautiful is the very charm of life. The love of justice and goodness belong with beauty. It is only in case a man can derive some profit from it that he ever becomes iniquitous. His impulses are to help, not to injure others, and the sight of any act of violence and injustice arouses indignation and even a defense of the oppressed, an impulse that is not always appreciated in civil life because it is restrained by the sense of a still higher duty to let the laws have the office of correction. On the other hand, an act of generosity and clemency inspires love in us, and a noble emulation. The appeal of these things affects us across the centuries, and by no manner of means can they be interpreted as to our interest, though Helvétius had labored in vain to show it, as Hobbes before him. The truth is that we hate the wicked, not because they hurt us, but because we hate the wickedness itself; and we value happiness as such, for ourselves and for others, and whenever others enjoy it at no cost to ourselves we actually have our own happiness increased by the fact. Those who are unhappy we are very prompt to pity, and we even suffer with them. The most perverse and brutal men are not unaffected thus at some point or other in their careers.

The most undoubted evidence for a conscience is intimate and confessional. What is the meaning of that remorse a man feels for 'secret crime', which even prompts him to expose it himself? 'Alas, who of us has never heard that importunate voice?' 'Let us obey nature, and we shall know with what kindness she reigns, and what charms we can find, after listening to her, in giving a true account of ourselves. . . .'

But we must look also to the wide world and history. 'Everywhere the same ideas of justice and goodness, everywhere the

same principles of morality, everywhere the same notions of good and evil.' Though ancient religions sanctified viciousness in their gods, 'the moral instinct repulsed it from the hearts of men.' 'The sacred voice of Nature' was stronger than that of the gods. 'There is, then, in the depths of the soul of man an innate principle of justice and virtue, according to which, despite our own maxims, we judge our actions and those of others, as being good or bad, and it is to that principle that I give the name of conscience.'¹

Now for the questions of those who pretend to much wisdom and say that conscience is only prejudice instilled from infancy: all things in the mind are introduced by experience and all ideas of justice, goodness, &c. are simply 'acquired'. In proof whereof the philosophers, and with them the sceptic Montaigne—shame to him for abandoning all frankness and sincerity at this point—ransack the corners of the earth for obscure examples of the diversity of justice in the form of custom, and then declare there is no real justice and no working together of men for a public good save for their own private interests.² 'How, then, does it happen that the just man is so at a cost to himself?' Will it be argued that he goes to death for his own interest? Of course, every one acts with a view to what he deems good, but there is a 'moral good' involved in such a case which cannot be denied. Would they say the life and death of Socrates and Regulus meant nothing to mankind? 'The voice of Nature as well as reason is against them.'

A generation wedded to the doctrine that conscience is altogether acquired from experience, and nothing but the prejudice of blind custom, needed to be argued out of its fallacy in the terms of its own view. It was another principle of their philosophy that 'we feel necessarily before we know'. So these philosophers ought to honor the natural sentiments wherever they chance upon them. 'Just as we do not have to learn to will our own good and fly the evil, but have that will direct from Nature, so the love of the good and hatred of the evil are as natural as the love of ourselves. The acts of conscience are not intellectual conclusions but sentiments, and while all our ideas come to us from without, the sentiments which appreciate them are within us, and it is by them alone we know the fitness or lack of fitness between ourselves and the things we ought to seek out or to flee.' The 'primary natural sentiments' are the love of self, fear of pain, horror of death, desire of well-being. And if, as the Encyclopedists had vigorously contended, 'man is sociable by nature, or at least intended to become so', then this

¹ *Émile*, pp. 259-60.

² Cf. Helvétius, *De l'Esprit*, pp. 44-56.

betokens specific sentiments in him relative to the species. Grant, then, both the sentiments, and it is precisely 'from that double relationship of man to himself and to his fellows that the impulse of conscience arises'. While it is true 'man has no innate knowledge of the good, yet, once his reason makes him acquainted with it, his conscience leads him to love it; that's the sentiment that is innate'. So much for the philosophers on their own terms.¹

Rousseau believed it is not impossible to explain conscience as 'an immediate principle' of human nature, quite independent of reason. But to attempt this would simply be pressing the case beyond necessity. 'Let us confine ourselves to the primary sentiments we find in ourselves, since it is always back to them that our study leads us, when it does not lead us astray.'

'Conscience, Conscience, divine instinct, immortal and heavenly voice; sure guide of an ignorant and limited being who is yet intelligent and free; thou infallible judge of good and evil, who makest man like unto God. It is thou who makest the excellence of his nature and the morality of his actions; without thee I am aware of nothing in myself that lifts me above the beasts, except the sad privilege of wandering from errors to errors by the help of an understanding without rule and a reason without principle.'²

'Thank God, we're done with that!' But Rousseau was not quite done with it. His mentioning the possibility that conscience might be entirely independent of reason no doubt recalled arguments he had had with Diderot about the foundations of natural right and morality. Can reason alone furnish a solid basis for virtue? No, there must be some sentiment. Is it the love of order? 'But that love of order can it, then, and ought it, take precedence to my own well-being? Let them give me a clear and sufficient reason for preferring order (to my own good)?' Here was the 'independent man' again, but he had, since those earlier days, learned further argument against the rationalist. There is an order in the conduct of every being who is possessed of feeling and intelligence, so that, on this count alone, virtue and vice are quite indistinguishable. The real difference is that the good man orders his life in relation to the whole, and the bad man orders the whole in reference to himself. He makes himself the centre of all things; the other measures his radius and keeps himself at the circumference. Then he is organised by reference to the common centre, which is God, and in relation to all the concentric circles which are his creatures. If the Divinity does not exist, the wicked man alone

¹ *Émile*, pp. 261-2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 262.

has sense, the good man is nothing but a fool.' The love of God, therefore, and not merely the love of order, is the real foundation of morality. This love gives force to the duties of 'natural Law' which are almost effaced by the injustice of men toward each other. The moral man feels himself to be the product and instrument of the Grand Being who wills the Good and sees that it is done in the life of the individual himself through the concurrence of his own will and the employment of his liberty. Man is made to be happy in an order where all is good. And when he suffers injustice he will bear it with patience, and will toil at being good himself without witnesses, because he must believe that the just God will make all good in the end.

With this thought one is again at an ultimate question concerning God's way with man. It is not possible to say why man's soul is bound up with sense and body. Only a conjecture may be made, that unless man were endowed with a body to care for, and an interest other than that in the general order, he would miss the glory of achieving virtue by his own free will and not enjoy the consciousness of having done well.¹ Even in the life he leads on earth, then, his 'primary inclinations are lawful' and all his ills must be self-wrought vices. It is not reasonable to blame Providence when we see so much that we might do to make evil less of a reality. We would truly be masters of ourselves and our passions, if, at the happy moment of youth, when our minds are open and not obfuscated by habit, we knew the right objects to occupy ourselves with and could appreciate in advance those of which we were still ignorant. Once those critical days are past, and we are involved in the world's work, we can only look forward to the time when we are truly ourselves without contradiction. To prepare for that time we must exercise ourselves in 'sublime contemplation', meditating the order of the universe, not arguing about it; conversing with God, but not beseeching Him to give what He has already given us, a conscience to love the good, reason to know it, freedom to choose it. Man cannot ask for more, and he ought in all reason to bless God and pray that His Will be done. And further, one last request, that if there be any mistakes in his beliefs concerning Him, as is very likely, they may be forgiven.²

A pause came here in the profession. Rousseau had not always thought thus, as his former disciple Deleyre had reminded him when he first came out with the opinion that religion is the life and force of all morality. He had once held quite other views.

¹ Cf. Malebranche, *Méd.* 11, pp. 137-9; *Méd.* 14, sect. 4, p. 182.

² *Émile*, pp. 263-5.

In the early days of association with Diderot and the philosophers he had accepted Bayle's doctrine that morality is independent of religious belief and disbelief; and indeed he had himself developed the moral autonomy of conscience which made him turn away from the devout Vernes whose views on revelation constituted a denial thereof.¹ He had reasoned in the same manner as the deists against all such pretentious claims to authoritative doctrine, whether in a Book or in a Church, and he acquiesced in the strictures of the Encyclopedists on miracles, revelations, authority, though it is true he refused to agree with Deleyre's article on 'Fanaticism'. On these matters he now felt he ought to give an account of himself. The recent events had made his position seem too ambiguous and rendered some declaration imperative. Where did he stand as between the Encyclopedists and Rome and Geneva?

The profession continued, then, as a biography of the discussions that had left their mark on his mind at Paris and made him either doubtful or unwilling to believe. In some aspects things seemed veritable mysteries about which nothing positive could be said; in others, they were positively rejected as inimical to beliefs already held. Revelation, the disclosure of God to man, is a mystery, but when it is construed to mean that the individual cannot find God in the world by himself and by his own thought but must have recourse to an institution where other men tell him what God is and what is His Will, then revelation is simply false doctrine because it is calculated to make for authority and 'render man proud, intolerant, cruel', fruits proving that theirs is certainly not a true and natural religion. But those who believe it argue, saying, that some authority must be established because so many diverse cults would be set up otherwise. The retort is that it is the very claim to special revelation which gives rise to the diverse cults. They are all alike unessential to religion. The true cult of God is one of the inner spirit of every sincere man. All ceremonies are external matters, having simply to do with good order in society, and in this respect they are quite properly regulated by law. Beyond that, however, authority cannot go. If they cry: 'Submit thy reason', the answer must be, 'I must have reasons for submitting my reason'.² But, they counter, this is a matter of revelation, God has spoken thus and so. To whom? Always to those other men, not myself. 'It is but men who come to tell me what God has said. I should prefer to have heard God Himself.' They offer proof of that special revelation of which they have charge, that there were prodigies accompanying its disclosure, prodigies

¹ Cf. Bayle, *Continuation*, LIV, vol. iii, p. 260.

² *Émile*, p. 269.

on record in books. But then books are works of men. 'Oh, how many men there are between God and me.' So the horrible discussion can go on as to the authenticity of the truth revealed but not to reason or to the individual believer. One would have to go into the records of the past and study the spirit and metaphor of Oriental languages to be sure of the meaning of all that is reported in the writings. Even supposing the report true, one would have to believe in miracles simply because fanatical and persecuted minds asserted them. To the modern man, and to the most religious of them—Malebranche could have been cited—miracles are incredible. 'It is the unalterable order of Nature that best shows the wise hand that rules her; if there happened to be many exceptions, I should not know any more what to think; and for myself, I believe too much in God to believe in so many miracles so little worthy of Him.'¹ A miracle needs to be proved by doctrine, and one bearing in itself 'the sacred character of Divinity'. But what a doctrine has prevailed, a vengeful, jealous God, arbitrarily choosing a small sect, and proscribing all the rest of humanity who are destined to eternal torment! That repugns one's belief in a God who is clement and good, whose existence reason shows. Reason may not, indeed, reveal very much, precisely because it makes strict demands of all truth, that it shall be clear and luminous and come from striking evidence. Yet it is only by such understanding that a man gains a sure and firm faith. That being so, all human authority must be set aside and the only influences of one person on another must be by appeal to his understanding. Rousseau depicted a dialogue where an 'inspired' man tried in vain to convince a 'reasoner' without allowing him to be possessed of any truth to begin with—as if the certitude of things so difficult to believe could have any meaning for a person devoid of any conception of eternal truth.

Other difficulties arise. There are many different religious cults for one who follows reason, and interminable, elaborate research would be necessary for a rational choice of one over all the others. The religious sect near at hand must always win in such a competition—'the absent one is always wrong'. Europe contains three chief religions, the Jewish admitting one revelation only, the Christian, two, and the Mohammedan, three, and all these in languages which the modern Arab, Christian and Jew no longer understand. Translations exist, and

¹ *Émile*, p. 270; Malebranche stood by the fact of 'general laws'. His definition of 'miracle' eviscerated the absolute meaning of the term: 'tout ce qui n'est point une suite nécessaire des lois naturelles qui se sont connues et dont les effets sont communes', *Méd.* 8, p. 98. All morals are the result of a law 'unknown to us', pp. 104-5. Bayle, *Pensées diverses, Œuvres*, CCXXX, vol. iii, p. 139.

presumably faithful ones. 'Always books, what a mania! Because Europe is full of books, the Europeans regard them as indispensable. . . . All these books, have they not been written by men? . . .'¹

The Catholics make a great to-do about the authority of the Church. It all amounts to this: 'The Church decides that the Church has the right to decide.'

The case of the Jews in the era of intolerance is instructive. They can never speak for themselves: 'the unfortunates feel that they are at our discretion.' To appreciate the meaning of their religion it would be necessary first 'that they have a free State, schools, universities, where they might speak and dispute without risk. Then alone could we know what they have to say.'²

Thus everywhere the reasons for a faith are given under social circumstances which preclude any other alternative and force people to adopt it. Take away all the many constraints, and the objections of reasoners would demolish the claims of every established cult which professes an exclusive revelation and damns all not submitting to its authority. Now every man should be at liberty to see for himself in this matter: 'No one is exempt from this fundamental duty of man; no one has the right to trust himself to the discretion of others.'³ The slightest yielding on this point is the surrender of all. The pride and intolerance of those claiming authority go to any length of absurdity in dogma and cruelty in practice. One does best to shut all books, too, and look only to that book 'open to all eyes, the book of Nature' which speaks a language 'intelligible to all minds'. Man needs only to use the faculties immediately given him by God to learn to know and love Him and His works, and to will the good He wills, and to fulfil, for His sake, all duties on earth.

In regard to revelation, then, this is the position: If it were a doctrine divorced from all connection with books and Churches, the truth of it might be appreciated. As far as reason goes, some proofs of such a thing exist, although the objections are equally strong, so that the mind stays in a suspense of judgment which is neither an acceptance nor a rejection. 'The only thing I do reject is the obligation to recognise it, because such pretended obligation is incompatible with the justice of God.'⁴ There the moralist took his stand, on the article of faith permeating all his thought on politics, education, religion: *the obligation to recognise* any claim must come from within, as an expression of the free spirit of man.

Then as regards the authority of the Scripture: 'I avow, too, that the sacredness of the Gospel is an argument that speaks to my heart. . . . Look at the books of the philosophers with all

¹ *Emile*, pp. 274-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

their pomp: how little they are beside that book. . . ! When Plato paints his imaginary just man covered with all the opprobrium of crime and worthy of all the prizes of virtue, he paints, trait for trait, Jesus Christ: the resemblance is so striking that all the Fathers felt it. . . . Yes, if the life and the death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and the death of Jesus are of a God.' The whole morality of the Gospel is so 'perfectly inimitable' that it must be considered divine. Yet 'for all that, the same Gospel is full of unbelievable things, things which are repugnant to reason and which it is impossible for any sensible man either to conceive or to admit. What is one to do in the midst of all these contradictions? Be always modest and circumspect . . . regard in silence what one can neither reject nor comprehend, and humble oneself before the great Being who alone knows the truth.'¹

An 'involuntary scepticism' remains on such points of religion, though it does not attain, in any way, those already established as 'essential for practice'. 'I regard all particular religions as so many salutary institutions which prescribe in each country a uniform manner of honoring God by a public cult, and which can have their several reasons in the climate, in the government, in the genius of the people, or in any other local cause which makes one preferable to another, at the time and place. I believe them all good when one serves God fittingly in them. The essential cult is that of the heart.' However, one condition must always be fulfilled by these religions, that they shall 'never preach the cruel dogma of intolerance', for 'the duty of following and loving the religion of one's country does not extend to the dogmas contrary to good morals, as is that of intolerance. It is that horrible dogma which arms men against each other and makes them all alike enemies of the human race. The distinction between civil tolerance and theological tolerance is puerile and vain. The two tolerances are inseparable, and one cannot admit the one without the other.'² On this Rousseau was at one with Montesquieu and Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, who were themselves but carrying out the ideals of Spinoza and Bayle of the century before. In the critical situation of the year 1760 Rousseau intended to make his stand on that score entirely clear to 'the devout' and 'the authorities'.

A summary of Christian wisdom follows: 'Keep your soul in a state of desiring always that there be a God, and you will never doubt concerning Him. Beyond that, whatever side you might take, remember that the true duties of religion are independent of the institutions of men, that a just heart is the true

¹ *Emile*, pp. 280-1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 282 and note.

temple of the Divinity, that in every land and every sect, to love God above all, and one's neighbor as oneself, is the summary of the law. Further, no religion dispenses with the duties of morality and there is nothing truly essential save these. And the internal cult is the first of these duties, and without faith no true virtue exists.'¹

Then a declaration as to the philosophers of Paris. Flee those who, pretending only to be expressing doubt, actually 'sow in the hearts of men desolating doctrine' and become as dogmatic and sophistical as their intolerant adversaries whose fanaticism they attack. 'Bayle has very definitely proved that fanaticism is more pernicious than atheism, and that cannot be gainsaid:² but what he has not been careful to say, and is no less true, is that fanaticism, although sanguinary and cruel, is for all that a great and strong passion which exalts the heart of man, makes him despise death, gives him a prodigious energy—a passion which needs only to be better directed to yield the most sublime virtues. On the other hand, irreligion, and in general the reasoning and philosophical kind, attached to life, makes men effeminate, makes the soul mean, concentrates all the passions upon the low passion of private interest and the debasing of the human self, and thus saps little by little the true foundations of all society. . . .' Atheism causes no bloodshed, not because it has a moral ideal of peace among men, but simply because it is 'indifferent to the good'. The tranquillity it brings is like that of a despotism, 'the tranquillity of death'. Fanaticism never produces such a consequence, although it is, in its immediate effects, more terrible than atheism. And it still remains to be seen whether philosophy, once on the throne, will master all the interest and ambitions and meannesses of men, and practise the gentle humanity it preaches. Religion has more to commend it in the matter of practice than philosophy. 'To be sure, no one follows absolutely all his religion when he has one. Most people scarcely have any, and do not follow what they have; that is also a fact. But then some few men have a religion and follow it, at least, in part, and it is undoubted that the motives of religion often prevent them from doing evil, and will obtain from them virtues and laudable deeds which would never have come to pass save for those motives.' The influence of religion as a moral control shows itself in the whole modern political order where governments possess an authority and suffer less from revolution than in antiquity, and even such as occur are less bloody than ever before. Despite all the fanaticism, the Christian religion has made the morals of men gentler. 'How

¹ Ibid., p. 284. ² Ibid., p. 285 and note. Bayle, *Pensées diverses*, CXXXIII, p. 86.

many works of mercy are the fruit of the Gospel!' And now the independent man gives his final retort: 'Philosopher, thy moral laws are very fine, but show me, please, their sanction.'¹ There is none save the love of God in the heart of man, which alone gives force to his consciousness of the good and the right. This was the important point of difference Rousseau felt it necessary to signalise between himself and the Encyclopedists and philosophers in the year 1760.²

On September 6th of that year, in the full swing of achieving his final profession, Rousseau addressed himself to the pious Formey at Berlin who had requested him to give a reasoned account of his views. He put off giving such a statement in a letter but intimated clearly where he stood. 'Although I am very far from making common cause with the philosophers of whom you speak, I am not at all of your advice; but so far from taking it ill that you are not of mine, I can only feel how obliging and straightforward is your manner of combating it. You think both too well and too ill of me, Sir. You believe that I am a philosopher, and I am not one at all; you believe me obstinate in my sentiments and I am still less that. I cannot make myself believe what I do not believe, or disbelieve what I do believe; but what I can do is not to be angry that any one who is not of my views should speak his own thought sincerely and frankly. Besides, I doubt whether any one in the world loves and respects religion more sincerely than I, but that does not prevent my detesting and despising what men have added to it that is barbarous, unjust, and pernicious to society. . . .'³

¹ *Émile*, p. 287 n.; cf. Bayle's view, *Pensées diverses*, CLXI-CLXXX, vol. iii, pp. 103-15.

² Malebranche, after speaking of man as the image of God, added: 'Image, encore un coup, qui doit être réparée, qui doit être perfectionnée, et qui ne le peut être que par la raison universelle des intelligences, et que par l'amour substantiel, principe général de tous les mouvements des esprits.' *Méd.* 14, sect. 2, p. 180. The 'amour substantiel' is the love of God that works in man. It was needed over and above rational enlightenment.

³ To Formey, Sept. 6, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 869.

CHAPTER XVIII

TOWARDS A TREATISE ON POLITICS

THERE was still something to say about society. Rousseau had got far away from the onward march of his ideas for the *Political Institutions*, diverted by his interest in matters personal and domestic and his need to take a stand in the matter of faith. The theme of that vast work had been one of the competence of men, if they come together in agreement, to form a society with a sovereignty which rules over all and obliges them to be just, and thus restores righteousness to their lives, without sacrifice of liberty. The first manifestation of such assembling of men by their own free will would be the fundamental pact instituting the body-politic. But the general rule of sovereignty must be expressed in definite rules of life in the community, in laws. Whence come these laws? Not, certainly, from a superior who is outside the body of all thus united by their own will, but from the whole body of the people who give themselves the law they are obliged to obey. This establishing of the laws in a society is the legislation, and it is the second aspect of the assembling of people, the second institution, as it were. To be sure the 'legislator' is a very special personage in the law-making, a person of vision and disinterestedness able to know the general good on occasion and to elicit the opinion and will of others concerning it—but this particular being is not the traditional 'sovereign' of history; he is more like a teacher, one such as Socrates who enables others to know themselves and their own real good. By the help of such instructors it is possible for the people of a veritable society so founded to legislate for themselves. And by analogy, perhaps, it might be possible to depict the people actually governing themselves through 'agents' or 'administrators' whom they set up in office and from time to time inspect, in their execution of the public law, and change or remove according to their will. It is true such an action is not a clear case of sovereignty, because it has regard to particular persons; yet, whatever the deed be called in the strict logic of politics, here is another instance of the people assembled to do for themselves what must needs be done—and the third institution, Government, thus appears an affair of all the people. And apparently that theme had yet another illustration, in the matter of the religious cult, which is of so much importance to the life of men. It is possible to conceive of a civil religion containing the articles of faith in such a republican order—articles established by the assembled people, and as fundamental as the

terms of the original pact itself. Perhaps, too, the theme went on still farther in his vision, an assembling of people to unite in a federation of nations in the cause of peace and international justice, which is the profound interest of every one, and to eliminate the spirit of domination and tyranny from every sphere of influence. It was from his work on this comprehensive scheme of reform in human society that the citizen of Geneva had been taken by what happened at the Hermitage. The project had now been for some time in abeyance, and such essays and criticisms as had been committed to writing were kept from the public as being things too incomplete.

But the ideas on which he had written in 1755 and 1756 were fixed in his mind, and they had enjoyed a career in his own life. He was firmly convinced that the only basis of any human association is the agreement of the persons concerned, agreement freely entered into and maintained in the same spirit, which leads to respect for others and recognition of their equal rights, and which allows nothing like wealth, influence, position, or any other coercive element to enter into the relationship. It was also his belief that all obligations, duties, laws, regimens, must be self-imposed. And it followed that any personal influence exercised in any other spirit is simply a case of tyranny and domination.

As Diderot put it, Rousseau was 'the first dupe of his own sophisms'.¹ Unluckily Diderot and his other friends were at that time in ignorance of the ideas in his book on *Political Institutions*, due, perhaps, to his natural secretiveness about matters that had the quality of a faith, perhaps, to his fear of being distracted by argument and need of proceeding by way of silent meditation to his goals of insight, and perhaps to his jealous care not to have his ideas used by others in their 'literary correspondence', as happened with some of his notes, apparently, when he was away in Geneva—such little plunderings would make him resentful and unwilling to trust another with his most precious thoughts. In any case, he had deliberately avoided acquainting Diderot with the materials of this book nearest his heart. So his friends only perceived his outer actions and missed the true motivation of them. They could not realise how a man enthusiastic about Geneva and reading his Bible daily, as well as his 'master' Plato, would be different from themselves in maxims of conduct. They never could understand his peculiar passion for liberty; nor his ideas of obligation; nor his insistence upon making explicit agreements with people, and

¹ Diderot, *Réfutation suivie de l'ouvrage d'Helvétius intitulé l'Homme*, vol. ii, pp. 316-17, 412.

doggedly sticking to them afterwards. They seem to have taken their consorts by due process of marriage only to ignore the duty of fidelity—doing both as a matter of course, not making much of their ‘contract’; he, for his part, was careful to tell Thérèse Le Vasseur that he would not unite with her in marriage, but remained attached to her.¹ In his dealings with Mme d’Épinay he had an understanding quite explicit about the conditions of life at the Hermitage on her estate, and he later did the very same thing with the Marshal and Mme de Luxembourg. He was scrupulous about all his undertakings, scrupulous to a point that won him the admiration of the men of affairs with whom he had business, and not only admiration but strong friendship like that of his publisher Rey, who later made him godfather to his child and settled an annuity on Thérèse in order to relieve his mind on the score of her fate after his own death. He acted, therefore, on these ideas of obligation, contract, equality, freedom. They were the chief values of his own life, and by reference to them he tried to govern his own conduct. All this inner fidelity of the man the friends who were now separated from him in space as well as spirit could not see: and the result was two unhappy years for him, full of both torment and confusion of mind, with a sense of some real guilt because of his passion and a remissness long past, but overwrought by the charges of greater guilt and wickedness from those friends whose past knowledge of him constituted an argument in his own soul against himself. And of course he had his faults, too, in these difficulties of his life, the faults of one whose mind was obsessed by his ideas. Because he was so jealous of the liberty and right of the individual he was sometimes too touchy, too quick to suspect an intent to violate his rights, to gain his intimacy by gifts and services. This proud liberty hurt those who were naturally drawn to him and who sought, quite disinterestedly, to enjoy his company. But he wanted always to be free to work at his own discretion, and so he resiled from them, while they persisted, as is natural, to win him over. Such a solitary yet attractive nature is a challenge to the sociable and lures them on to make a conquest; it is all instinct, as it were, not deliberate, except in very special cases. Mme d’Épinay liked to have him at her house, and she found it a need when her lover was gone to the army, and she engaged his time in ways unforeseen by him when they arranged for his abode at the Hermitage. He saw in that situation not the natural growth of an interest between them but an intention on her part to violate their original ‘agreement’. He ascribed to her a purposeful action merely because

¹ Cf. Matthew Josephson, *J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 143.

his own were such in dealings of this sort. To be sure there were other elements in the affair besides his ideas of liberty and contract. He discerned the note of jealousy in Mme d'Épinay who was witness to his impassioned affection for Mme d'Houdetot—and jealousy is an attitude of domination. Moreover, he had no wish to give any more of his time when his whole fancy was engaged elsewhere—his contract with Mme d'Épinay did not then admit of any revision to meet the new situation: it could only be broken, if changed at all. And then with regard to his obligations, when Diderot or Grimm presumed to tell him what was his duty, whether to Mme d'Épinay or to Mme Le Vasseur, he saw in their action not a friendly interest which might be only mistaken but actually a tyrannical desire to tell him what he ought to do, as if he were a child. The implied superiority made him furious and foolish. He would hear of no duties from the mouth of others. Such presumption excited him and provoked quarrels, and he expected 'the aggressor', the violator of the contract of equality, to take the first steps of amends, though often he dearly wanted the reconciliation himself. He always stuck at the conceding word which might imply submission on his part, so extreme was his hatred of domination. 'For God's sake', Diderot cried, though he was himself none too wise in their embroilment, 'follow your heart not your head.'¹ And it was true counsel, for whereas his feelings disposed him to yield and forgive and be happy with others he remained obstinate with his ideas of agreements, rights, obligations, &c. Even Mme d'Houdetot who was enchanted by her ardent moralist was forced to tell him that the 'application' of his principles was wrong, a criticism struck from her when, having proffered him financial assistance, obeying the same impulse as moved a number of others who could not bear to see his poverty and distress, she had been rebuffed with a retort that she apparently set the greatest store by money and not enough on the true gifts of the heart. She forgave him that wild and cruel charge, knowing only too well that he made it through being denied the gifts of her own heart. But she was in a better position than any one to see that he was, indeed, the dupe of his own ideas and not always master of them when it came to practice. On the particular question of money and the obligations connected with it he was, indeed, stubborn and extreme. Rather than allow anything of the sort to enter into his relations with friends he set out belatedly to reclaim his rights under the contract he had made many years before with the directors of the Opera, which had really lapsed by his own earlier neglect, and he

¹ Above, vol. i, p. 287.

adopted a most legalistic and intransigent attitude that was utterly futile.¹ In distress and finding the roof of his cottage about to collapse, he had to accept hospitality for a time from his titled neighbors at Montmorency. He was grateful and obliged for this help, and yet, after being happily settled he bethought himself that he had not made any explicit agreement with them about the terms of his residence. It was characteristic caution and scrupulosity. It was duly appreciated by the Marshal, who did not misunderstand him, and likewise by various other men such as Lenieps, the banker, Rey, his publisher, Malesherbes, the censor. With such men of affairs his connections were not so unfortunate as those he had with the fevered, close society of the men of letters and philosophers and grand ladies of Paris. They valued his honest, independent attitude. And though Mme d'Houdetot felt that the application was extreme and unwise, she knew, as they did, that his 'principles were sound'.

One who puts ideas to the test of life is bound to learn something in the way of further wisdom. Rousseau learned some moral lessons from his experience, and especially where it touched closest home. His unhappy love of Mme d'Houdetot brought him face to face with the reality of inner obligation. He found himself obliged by his very affection itself to respect her person and heed a certain law of human intercourse. The lesson was recorded afterwards in the *Moral Letters* intended for her from whom he learned it, where he confessed that he had been forced to become master of himself, and though he bemoaned weakly the denial of his desire, he saw none the less that it was good for him to be denied. From that self-knowledge he derived a piece of wisdom for the education of the young Émile, that one is preserved from all unchastity by a true love. And he came to see in every form of friendship and intimacy a sort of union which involves an absolute regard for the liberty and will of other persons, and at the same time a restraint upon one's own will. Thus marriage was extolled in the *Letter to D'Alembert*, in *Julie* and in *Émile*, as an inestimable good for mankind and the most sacred of all contracts. It must be a free engagement of the parties themselves at the outset, and then, from that time forth, it contains a law for their common life together, a law superior to their own desires and yet entirely in the interest of

¹ 'The moment the agreement is broken, my work belongs to me anew . . . I ceded my work to the Opera on conditions that have been violated; I sold it for a price that has not been paid; my work does not belong, then, to the Opera, but to me. If they are so disdainful of all justice, I demand, I do, justice in all its rigor: I want the whole price stipulated, or else that the sale be declared null . . .' To Lenieps, Apr. 5, 1759, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 620.

their continued liberty and happiness with each other. Thus marriage exhibited anew the nature of the true contract and its great significance in human life.

There was a specifically moral principle learned in this connection. The prayer of Émile at the time of his entrance upon his responsibilities in marriage was his own: 'Make me free by protecting me against my passions which do me violence; keep me from being their slave; and force me to be my own master, never obeying my senses but always my reason.' This moral freedom was the important result of life in true association with others where a common law obtains. For such a rule of the general will is a security not only against the lawlessness of others but also against the weakness, passion, and lack of scruple in oneself as well. This sovereignty cannot, therefore, be too highly esteemed. And the union of wills which establishes it in any human relationship ought to be made as perfect as possible, since it spells a more perfect freedom for every party to it. Thus sovereignty became more significant for Rousseau as a moral power.

From time to time Rousseau had been explicitly engaged with political ideas. In October 1758, after the publication of his *Letter to D'Alambert*, an anonymous letter came from some lawyers castigating him on various counts, and on this in particular that his argument implied 'there is in a State an authority superior to the sovereign authority'. Their language 'sovereign authority' meant, of course, the determinate, legal person in whom the forces of the State are vested, in fact, the Government. Rousseau's reply to this was nothing less than a salvo! 'Yes, I admit such superiors, not one only but three—first, the authority of God, second, that of natural law derived from the nature of man, and then that of honor, a power stronger in the heart of an honest man than all the kings of earth.' Further, these three other authorities are not simply 'independent' forces, they are actually superior to the so-called sovereign. And in a foot-note it was intimated that the lawyers had made an entirely wrong use of the term sovereign and that some other definition ought to be adopted so as to obviate the absurdity of an authority superior to the superior of a political society. Here as before he followed 'the common opinion' for the sake of argument, but gave notice of inquiries still to be made as to the nature of sovereignty.¹

Certainly the prevailing confusion of the 'sovereign authority' with the 'government' needed to be dispelled. There was a

¹ Reply to an anonymous Letter, Oct. 15, 1758, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 559.

distinction made by Aristotle, and among the moderns by Bodin and Locke, between 'the republic' or the whole political body, and 'the administration thereof'. Rousseau had accustomed himself to think of government as simply such administration. Thus when a writer sent him for criticism (presumably because he was an 'authority' since writing the 'Political Economy' article) a *Prospectus on Finance*, he wrote with ironical praise of what it divulged concerning 'that part of the administration'.¹ Ironical, because the moderns were merely interested in the question of revenues for the government, and also because they were always dealing with this or that part and not the whole administration of a State. They simply followed the existing order without going into any fundamental questions. He had encountered these questions in his essay on the social contract and his studies in St. Pierre. How does the government act for the body-politic? How can it act efficiently and with some accord between the various parts of the administration? How can its power be brought under the rule of the general will without the futile device of 'division of powers'? What is a government; is it a body of representatives? What is to prevent them from usurping the sovereign authority of the whole people? Is it possible to conceive of conferring authority on any one else, even as an agent? Rousseau evidently felt some doubts about this from his own experiences in a personal matter. On the occasion of his controversy with the directors of the Opera he availed himself of the services of his friend Lenieps, who then took it upon himself to secure terms of a settlement which would yield something for his impoverished but proud friend, only to receive a letter flatly disavowing the action taken in his name and asserting that he wanted no one to represent him in the matter.² He had been suspicious of the very idea of representatives, ever since reading Hobbes who slyly sought to foist a personal sovereign upon men by speaking of him as 'their representative'. The doctrine was but a cover for the usurpation of sovereignty by a government. He was set against it in any form. And this made the problems of government more acute for him than ever. The only way out, apparently, was by forming small States and then federating them for the purposes of common defense and peaceful intercourse among communities of men. To solve all these questions concerning the political form of a State and the ordering of all the relations of the parts and the whole required a comprehen-

¹ Letter to Pesselier, May 3, 1759, No. 627.

² To Lenieps, May 7, 1759, No. 632. 'You are the master of speaking of my conduct as you please; say of your friend what you like and as you like; but when you make him speak for himself, I beg you, and I have the right to demand it of you, give him his own expressions, and not yours.'

sive treatise. Rousseau had scorned anything less than such a complete system of politics and so he had not published even what he had already composed toward such a work.

In the year 1759 Rousseau started reviewing his materials for the *Political Institutions*. The *Confessions* say that without interrupting the composition of *Émile*, he gave his attention to this other work and at the end of two years concluded it, as *The Social Contract*. Since it was ready for the publisher in August 1761, the period of two years began the latter part of 1759.¹ That this is fairly accurate is borne out by an expression in one of his letters of that date. He was replying to Martin, a minister of the gospel and disciple of his who had sent him for his perusal a retort he intended to make to an anonymous theological attack on the *Letter to D'Alembert*. The young man had written in great indignation because he suspected D'Alembert himself of having anonymously made the attack. Rousseau would not allow the imputation against D'Alembert and expressed himself in strong words: 'If he were in fact the author of the piece, which I cannot remotely believe, well, he would be a man to stifle.'² That phrase was the extreme language of Diderot toward the 'violent interlocutor' of his article on *Natural Right*, and it was in reference to that article that the very first discussion, in Chapter II of the essay on the social contract, was composed, entitled *On the General Society of the Human Race*.³ That this phrase, so reminiscent of the intellectual differences between himself and the Encyclopedists, should echo in this personal letter to Martin suggests that he was just then reviewing what he had written four years before and was full of the phrases, or turns of language, in that earlier version. No doubt he was trying to improve them, too, as was his custom—revising and revising constantly.

But the first thing he did was to make an abstract of his treatise for inclusion in *Émile*. Everything of interest had to come into that story of a young man reared according to nature. When the youth returns from his journeys in the wide world, having seen many lands and customs, he falls to wondering about his own allegiance, where he ought to live and take up his abode with the woman of his choice. It was now the right time for him to receive instruction in the true principles of politics. In Rousseau's earlier *Plans for Education* he had always included some books on the subject, such as those of Grotius

¹ *Confessions*, H., vol. viii, p. 370; to Rey, Aug. 9, 1761, C.G., vol. vi, No. 1112.

² To Martin, Sept. (or possibly Dec.) 1759, C.G., vol. iv, No. 678.

³ See above, vol. i, pp. 130 ff.

and Pufendorff, and especially the latter's *Duties of Man and Citizen*. Since then, of course, he had developed ideas of his own, critical of these masters; and he even had ambitions to supplant them. It was natural to substitute for those guides a brief version of his own projected book on politics. Besides, it was also likely because of his diminished energy and precarious health, that he would never complete his large work, and it was well to give the gist of it in this book that was now sure to be finished, the *Émile*.

The 'summary' proved to be a revision as well. For one thing, the order of treatment in the first Book was changed. The opening argument with Diderot scarcely appeared, save in the question whether mankind are born free or in bonds, independent or associated—by implication a natural association or general society is rejected. But in the place of that question Rousseau discussed another, whether men associate 'voluntarily or by force', and he there dealt with 'the false notions' which in the first version had only come *after* the statement of his own view. In the present instance the spurious 'rights' (whether they be called 'natural' or not was irrelevant) were to be despatched first, to make way for a true political right and sovereignty. Then the question of Law stood out, and Rousseau expressed dissatisfaction even with his own handling of it: 'This subject is entirely new: the definition of Law is yet to be made.' However, a definition was hazarded, an abstract of the results reached in various chapters of the early version. The institution of the Government next loomed up, and precisely at this place Rousseau later added a note, in 1761, to inform the reader that 'these questions and propositions are for the most part extracts from *The Social Contract*. . . .'¹ It is significant that the surviving manuscript of the early version stops exactly at this same place, and that the remainder of the work was torn off, and no doubt destroyed, by the author himself. The inference would seem to be that some of the material from this point on represents thought subsequent to the drafting of the first version, thought which rendered whatever had previously been composed on the subject worthless. Thus there were posed a number of questions about the possibility of a people divesting themselves, in any aspect at all, of their right of sovereignty, and of the will of any one ever being in constant accord with the general will, and even of a temporary accord, as in 'officers of the people'. No 'sovereigns' nor 'representatives' were allowed—but then

¹ Vaughan, vol. ii, p. 153 n.; H., vol. ii, p. 434. The ed. of 1782 indicates that this note was written in 1761, that is, when Rousseau was engaged upon the *Social Contract* for publication. He called the present sketch a 'summary'.

there was the question how the people could do by themselves what they were supposed to do. Could they be their own legislator? But were not the Roman People a great people? How did they manage it? Must there be, however, such vast nations? All these questions were those that had thronged about the puzzled mind of the author in the days following the first essay on the subject; they had been partly the cause of his delay in going ahead with his treatise; they had made him welcome the work on St. Pierre as a chance to develop his ideas by reflection upon those of another. And the result of all his further thought was now presented, and it is safe to infer, presented for the first time. The 'summary' ceases to be such even in form. There is a discussion of the nature of Government and its place in the body-politic which is utterly disproportionate, being as long as a whole chapter.¹ Rousseau was apparently working out something new—the sketch of Government in *Émile* was a first version of that portion of his essay, taking the place of what was not preserved in the previous account.² And with this, the 'summary' of his essay ended, so far as the instruction of the youth *Émile* is concerned: 'It is by the thread of these inquiries we shall succeed in finding out what are the duties and rights of citizens, and whether they are separable from each other. And also what such a thing as one's country is; what, precisely, it consists of; and by what marks every one can know whether he has a country or whether he has none.'

The author went on to instruct the public a little farther than the young *Émile*. There was that other important question on which he had written something, as part of his book on *Political Institutions*, the question of the relations of bodies-politic amongst themselves in peace and war. Men have not gone far enough in setting up their various particular societies on earth. Unless these Powers have intercourse with each other in accordance with a principle of right, the humanity organised in them must suffer from the twin scourges of war and tyranny. The remedies proposed for this condition, where the States of the world live without any rule or law, were seriously deserving consideration. Such remedies are 'leagues and confederations which, leaving each State to be master within, arm it externally against every unjust aggressor. We shall inquire how one can establish a good, federative association, and what will make it durable, and how far one can extend the right of the federation without hurt to

¹ Vaughan, pp. 153-7; H. vol. ii, pp. 435-8.

² It is important to note that when Rousseau despatched his final copy of the *Social Contract* to Rey in October 1761 he expressed concern lest it be lost in transit because his own remaining 'draft' was 'neither so accurate nor so complete' as the copy for the printer. To Rey, Oct. 14, 1761, *C.G.*, vol. vi, No. 1142.

that of the sovereignty.' Was the association proposed by Abbé de St. Pierre practicable and likely to be lasting? 'These inquiries lead us directly to all the questions concerning international law (*droit public*) which can do much to throw light on those concerning political right (*droit politique*).' 'And finally we shall lay down the true principles of the law of war, and we shall examine why Grotius and the others have given nothing but false ones.'¹

Thus Rousseau put on record in *Émile* the principles of law and politics which had been so far achieved in his *Political Institutions*. The latter portion of the statement looked, however, to further inquiries, to things which he might go on to accomplish—the tense was future, and the tone hopeful, as he followed the train of his vision of right everywhere enthroned in place of force and slavery and injustice. Yet when he put the last touches to the manuscript of his *Émile*, in October 1760, he felt exhausted from the prodigious expenditure of energy in its composition. He was ready to give up all writing, as if his career in letters was at last at a close: 'Thank Heaven, I've laid down my pen, never to take it up again; at least, the only use I'll make of it hereafter need little fear any distractions.'²

Thus the idea of doing anything more with the 'masterpiece' on *Political Institutions* was abandoned. He was even contenting himself apparently with the mere summary and sketch of some of the inquiries involved. The essay on the *Social Contract*, the studies on St. Pierre, the materials on the Law of War, all these writings in their fragmentary form were to be left in manuscript, either too dangerous or too incomplete to be made public in the form they then possessed. So matters stood when the *Émile* was finished, and Rousseau set his heart on getting that *summa* of his principles of politics, morality, and religion accurately published, as his title to a good name for ever among men. This became his chief concern for many months.³

A month after he had vowed never again to take up his pen, something of his exhaustion was gone, and his spirits were reviving, and his mind became active about the last question with which he had been concerned. No definite projects, apparently, were being entertained, nor was the pen taken up; but something was being meditated, at least, on the subject of international relations. An occasion arose which elicited these excogitations. His publisher, Rey, had informed him of the unfair treatment

¹ Vaughan, vol. ii, pp. 157-8; H., vol. ii, pp. 438-9.

² To Delalive, Oct. 7, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 890.

³ *C.G.*, Letters No. 944-5-6.

accorded foreign publications in France: the law safeguarded the copyright only of books originally authorised for publication within the domain. Rey had not expected to receive permission to print *Julie* in that country because of its religious views and consequently he had done it in Holland, intending to distribute the book through some local publisher at Paris; but Malesherbes, the censor, indicated that he could not refuse French publishers the right to *reprint* the book straightway, as soon as it appeared. This was a blow to the publisher of *Julie*. It was not any affair of pecuniary interest for Rousseau himself, since he had already been paid for the work. But he felt the injustice done Rey, and remonstrated with Malesherbes who was very friendly toward himself. Was it not a contradiction in policy to allow immediate reprintings of a book that would never have been authorised in the first place? Was it not unjust that printers who took no risks should benefit thus at the expense of one who risked all? Of course, Rey was a foreigner, and it might be retorted that every other country had the same right as France to treat foreigners thus, but in effect this right of the others amounted to nothing—Holland, for example, was no great market for French books and so the publishers in that country never had a chance to reap the same benefit from ventures by outside parties. Rousseau saw a case of real inequality here, and pleaded against it as bad international policy. It would be better all around if the government of France would adopt a more equitable principle of copyright. He offered some general reflections, then, on the proper give-and-take of States. 'My first remark is that there are many maxims regarding the law of nations which are uncontested and for all that are, and always will be, vain and without effect in practice, because they have to do with a supposed equality between States like that between men, a principle that is not true of the former, neither as regards their size, nor their form, nor consequently of the relative right of their subjects which derive from one or the other of these factors. Natural right is the same for all men who have all received from nature a common measure, and limits beyond which they cannot pass; but the law of nations, holding to the measures of human institutions which have no absolute bounds, varies, and ought to vary, from nation to nation. The large States impose the law on the small ones and they see that it is there respected; however, they also have need of the small ones, and more need, perhaps, than the small ones do of the large. It is necessary, then, that they shall cede to them something in equivalence for what they exact. The advantages taken in detail are not equal, but they compensate for each other,

and thence it is there arises the true law of nations, established not in books but between men. The one lot have the honors, the rank, the power; the other the ignoble profit and minor utilities. Whenever the large States want for themselves both their own advantages and a share in those of the small States, they want what is impossible, and however they manage it, they will never succeed in establishing in the small matters the parity they are not willing to suffer in the large.' An equity does in fact tend to establish itself; and ignoring this natural law of nations always ends in futility. 'There are never any laws observed except such as are consistent with the nature of a governance.' The remark repeated Aristotle—perhaps the idea of proportional justice hailed from his books as well—but it was very pertinent to the present case of international commerce and dealings. The administration of France could not outwit men who looked to their own rights in the matter regardless of the regulations. The practices of the publishers themselves proved the point. Thus Rey had not depended on his chances of selling the first edition of *Julie* in France by himself but had shrewdly disposed of the part destined for that country by taking in exchange a lot of French publications issued there, from the sale of which he would eventually get the value of his own edition. This left the direct selling of *Julie* to the French publisher who had made the deal with him. The exchange had already been effected and the consignment was actually in Paris. As far as the first edition was concerned, Rey was secure against utter loss, but he would not get the larger benefit of subsequent editions unless the censor refused to authorise the reprinting of the first—it was in order to obtain this right that Rousseau was here arguing. And it was to be noted well that the first effect of Malesherbes's refusal to prohibit the reprint would be simply to ruin that particular French bookseller who had taken on the venture from Rey, in favor of others who had shown no enterprise in the matter. The regulation of the government thus worked to the disadvantage of French subjects as well as of foreigners—it militated against commerce. A fair policy would be better for all parties, including France where so much business was transacted. Therefore, it would be an act of wisdom in the censor to apply the law of copyright in accord with that natural equity which in some way or other is bound to establish itself—let men only finish here, generally, what Nature has begun.¹

The argument went on farther, to deal with a suggestion Malesherbes himself had made privately, as a friend, not as the official censor, that he, the author, should not worry over much

¹ To Malesherbes, Nov. 5, 1760, C.G., vol. v, No. 917.

about his publisher and that he might very properly even share in the returns from what he chose to consider the pirated editions—why would he not do that? Such a proposal Rousseau flatly rejected. He felt he owed it to Rey to dissociate himself entirely from any such arrangement. ‘I made my agreement with the printer (Rey) on the basis of the value I assigned to what I rendered him. But it turns out that instead of selling him a right I really had, I have only sold him one I believed I had. If, then, this proves to be of less value than I believed, it is clear that instead of deriving a profit from my error, I owe him reparation for the disadvantage he is likely to suffer from it.’ To accept such gains would be tantamount to selling the manuscript twice over. Now he had previously had a slight disagreement with Rey on that score, when he himself wanted to issue a general edition in France of all his works, and Rey had then protested that it deprived him of his rights to the manuscripts and virtually sold the same book twice to different publishers. On that occasion Rey put the matter up to Rousseau’s conscience. And the decision was made according to this principle: ‘Since I feel myself bound to everything that I have either expressed or intended to express in my dealings, I am not bound to anything whatsoever beyond that.’ Thus he had claimed the right to publish a general edition himself, if he chose. But subsequent to that situation both he and Rey understood that the purchase of a manuscript entitled the printer to all subsequent editions of the work. He was now bound by his understanding. He simply would not hear of the proposal of Malesherbes. And so resolved was he to enforce the contract that he later determined to disavow the new edition of *Julie*, as unauthorised by himself, hoping thus to give the due benefit to Rey. His love of justice cost him something, too, for the refusal of the censor to prohibit reprints produced many complications amongst the various French publishers affected, and the author was drawn into long, irritating arguments over propositions with which he had never wanted anything to do. Part of the trouble was due to Malesherbes’s mistaken act of friendship, for he had stipulated with the publishers that they had to make a ‘present’ to the author, that is, they were to force him to accept a profit. It was not his part to condemn the censor for such conduct. He had to accept the gift. But he told Rey about it, and proposed to divide it with him as being the only solution in accord with self-respect and justice.¹

¹ For the correspondence on this matter, with Malesherbes, from Oct. 29, 1760 onward *C.G.*, vol. v, Nos. 906, 920, 974–8; with others, *C.G.*, vol. vi, Nos. 1035, 1042; with Rey, Nos. 1026, 1124.

Leaving the personal affairs aside, even Malesherbes perceived that the general argument on international relations contained the germ of something significant and new. 'I believe, especially, that the observation you make with regard to the reciprocal advantages of the large and the small States is the basis of a very profound piece of work, and one which might lead to (understanding) some of the causes of the revolutions of empires. But that matter cannot be dealt with in letters; moreover, it is not given to me to see into such great theories. That is for a man like you to go into from the ground up.' Rousseau replied by saying that he wanted to profit by Malesherbes's practical knowledge, 'in order to work out some old ideas which interest me, but of which I shall notwithstanding never make any use'.¹

For some time Rousseau had been in correspondence with Duclos, the official Historiographer of France, a writer on morals, and an associate of olden days at Paris. He had never become implicated in the quarrels and the criticisms emanating from the group about Mme d'Épinay. For his aloofness and independence of judgment in that regard Rousseau felt grateful, and in the loneliness of his last year or so at Montmorency he was increasingly drawn to this old friend who had so many interests like his own. Thus on the very eve of the appearance of *Julie*, when he was somewhat uneasy about its good taste and moral effect, he sent Duclos the corrected proofs in confidence, to get his criticism. He received some remarks by way of correction, but most were comments of such enthusiasm that he was overjoyed. Then he departed from his long reticence about his work on politics and opened up his 'sack', and let Duclos know that he still had unused material which was ready for publication, the work, particularly, on St. Pierre's *Lasting Peace*. Duclos promptly put him in touch with a publisher at Paris and urged him to offer still more of what he had worked out concerning Government.² This invitation was significant. Several years back this same friend had been very anxious that he should not go any farther than the article for the *Encyclopaedia*. Was it now in order to expound the principles more fully? Moreover, Malesherbes's high opinion of the ideas expressed to him on international relations was likewise an invitation to bring them out in public. On December 5th, 1760, he offered the *Project for Lasting Peace* to Bastide the publisher, and the printing of this piece was assured.³

¹ From Malesherbes, Nov. 13, 1760, No. 920; to same, Nov. 17, No. 921.

² Correspondence with Duclos, from Oct. 1760 to Feb. 1761, *C.G.*, vol. v, Nos. 899, 923-5, 931-2, 938-9, 959, 992.

³ To Bastide, Dec. 5, 1760, No. 936.

It chanced that later in December Rey, who had come to Paris on business, paid him a visit at Montmorency. It was their first meeting. And it was, as Rey wrote back from Paris, a 'happy time' for him to be with the man for whose genius and honesty alike he had so much admiration.¹ And Rousseau for his part was well pleased with Rey. He may have felt chagrin at his own failure to prevail upon the censor to allow him the sole rights to *Julie* in France: something seemed due the man in compensation. As a matter of fact he had all along thought of offering him the *Émile*.² But he had promised Mme de Luxembourg that he would entrust to her the arrangements for this book, since she had always insisted, as well as De Luc of Geneva, that he did not know how to make good terms for himself—a criticism obviously aimed at Rey, although it had not changed his preference for Rey as the one to publish his work.³ Here was the man himself, whose fair-dealing he liked, whose character was congenial, another Genevan who had gone out from his native land to settle in Holland to ply his trade. At the moment Rousseau must have regretted more than ever that his hands were tied by his promise to Mme de Luxembourg and that he could not dispose of his most-cherished work according to his own judgment. He had expressed his desire that she give Rey first choice but she had not agreed to do so. Whenever he felt chained and thwarted in such a way he was prompted to assert himself. The situation invariably aroused his spirit and touched off his genius. He owed Rey something; he wanted to give him the publication of *Émile*; he was unable to do that because he was under a bond—he would do something else instead. Though we may have to speculate thus as to the motives and sentiments occasioned by this meeting of the two men, the outcome of it is a fact of record—Rousseau showed Rey his manuscript of the *Social Contract*, and Rey, on looking it over, considered that it had enough material to make a little book by itself and he desired that he might be given the chance to publish it, which was, of course, granted. But he did not carry away with him

¹ From Rey at Paris, Dec. 20, 1760, No. 950.

² To Rey, Oct. 1760, No. 893. The 'new manuscript' there referred to must have been that of *Émile*—see also letters of Oct. 23, No. 900 and 910, which mention his 'latest work'. Two letters, moreover, are missing wherein Rousseau had explained to Rey the contents of this new work, but that only seems to prove that the work in question was *Émile*, because Rousseau desired the very greatest secrecy about it on account of the religious profession, and he probably requested that the description of the contents be destroyed by Rey. This work was the chief thing on his mind during the latter part of 1760—the preoccupation being manifest in letters to others, Nos. 932, 944, 946.

³ To Mme de Luxembourg, 'I desire that he (Rey) shall have the preference'. No. 946.

the manuscript, though he went rejoicing in the prospects.¹ The manuscript he had perused was undoubtedly that of the earlier version, and the author needed still to revise and prepare it for publication. An entirely new writing of the *Social Contract* thus took place, between December 1760, the date of Rey's visit, and August 9th, 1761, when it was all finished and ready to be dispatched to him.² Thus the unwearied pen of Rousseau was put to work again, impelled by friendship, a love of justice, a dislike of chains and a will to assert himself and the principle of freedom in human relations.

¹ To Rey, Dec. 23, 1761, *C.G.* vii. No. 1220. In this letter, sent a year later, after Rey had received the manuscript, Rousseau also noted the addition of some new material. Rey had not been able to contain his pleasure over the prospect of a new piece from the master-hand, for Rousseau took him to task for the gossip he caused: 'you have told all the world that you took away another manuscript from me.' Feb. 18, 1761, *C.G.* vi. No. 1026.

² The copy was ready Aug. 9, 1761. No. 1112. It was delivered to a private messenger for consignment to Rey on Nov. 6, because no other safe way of dispatching it could be found. No. 1170.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, OR PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL RIGHT

THE subject is 'political right', right and law in the political order. The spirit of the work is one of inquiry. 'I want to see if, in the civil order, some rule of administration can be had which is right and sure to work, taking men simply as they are, but laws, as they might be. I shall try, in this inquiry, to join what right permits with what interest prescribes, in order that justice and utility will not be found in the least opposed.' This was the high, dignified language of philosophy at its best in the eighteenth century.

The revision profited by the 'summary' of the argument which had been made for *Émile*. The 'propositions and questions' there singled out furnished the subjects and titles for the individual chapters of this version. Previously the captions had been the traditional ones, and Rousseau's own ideas were only emerging into clarity through discussion relating to them. Here, however, he was truly his own master, choosing his own ground, assigning things the order of importance they actually had for himself and discussing his own propositions, such, for example, as *That we must always go back to a first convention*, or his own question, *Whether the general will can err*. Being farther away from his encounter with the writers who had first made him think for himself he was now less irate and personal in his criticism. He had been too downright about the 'principles of tyranny' in those from whom he had, nevertheless, learned a great many of his own republican sentiments; he had been much too free with such epithets as 'paid sophist', even speaking thus of Grotius. There had been irony, sarcasm, and innuendo (as for instance the remark that women rule and are the true sovereigns of France), for which he would have been liable to feel the heavy hand of authority. Nothing like that first version could have been issued safely under his own name after the year 1758 when the *Encyclopædia* was suppressed and men so adroit as Voltaire and Helvétius were playing for safety. The truth was dangerous enough in itself without the added incitement of heated, bitter, strong language. And Rousseau wanted to eliminate these defects for other reasons besides policy, because he had come to dislike the spirit of satire more and more since his departure from the atmosphere of Paris. His aim was not to score points against notables or philosophers but to reason out a position in

general terms. Not infrequently his treatise had irony, indignation, and defiance in it, but even the model of virtue, Socrates, had spoken thus in the pages of Plato, for no moralist true to his ideals could avoid an occasional remark against things as they are. Despite some unwise lapses, for which the author paid dearly enough in the end, the *Social Contract* was composed as a work of philosophy.

For all that, there was no loss of the vivid and dramatic presentment so characteristic of the inspiration of Rousseau. His very first sentence starts an argument in the mind. 'Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains. Some one thinks himself master of others, and he is only more of a slave than they. How has this change come to pass? I do not know. What can make it right? I believe I can resolve that question.' Chains and slavery! Are they to be proved right? At once the questioning reader takes the attitude of the 'independent man'. The author, by seeming to argue for chains and slavery, enlists the reader, as it were, against himself, as defender of the very truth which he himself intends to maintain, in three ensuing chapters—*The First Societies*, *The Right of the Strongest*, and *Slavery*.

The question is whether sheer natural prestige like that of the father in a family, or the power of greater force, or the subjection due to voluntary bond, or the consequences of capture in war, whether any of these things authorises the political governance of men. Is such a right to rule others ever traceable to superior prestige, power, or the fact of ownership? Does not a right mean something over and above such natural facts? So the reader might ask, along with the author. And the answers would be not merely his conviction but their own. 'The strongest is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms his force into right, and obedience into duty. . . . Force is a physical power. I don't see at all what morality can result from its effects. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not an act of will. At the most it is but an act of prudence. But in what sense could it be a duty?' Or in another form, what is it a man is 'obliged to obey'? However stated, 'obligation', 'duty', 'morality', this is the thing essential in the case, and relates somehow to man's own will and freedom; and force in any form is entirely out of the question.

But modern writers had confused the moral right with the merely natural fact. They had been too much concerned about the old order of obedience and too wary about men's claims to liberty. Seeing people were generally cherishing a notion of a true right found only in what is voluntary, these writers had played up that concept in this form, that all men consent

originally to their subjection which of course obliges them all thereafter to an unlimited obedience to some authority. Grotius argued that a man has a natural right to alienate his liberty and bind himself to a master, if by so doing he can save his life, or gain a livelihood, and then he passed to the case of a whole people making this same surrender to their chiefs, and therefore subjecting themselves to an absolute authority for all their future. Could greater folly be imagined in view of the use kings actually made of their power? 'The subjects give up their persons, then, on condition that their goods are to be taken as well.' True, they enjoy a 'civil tranquillity' under such a régime, but it is the peace that men have when they are all alike helpless before a common doom. Yet, even allowing such an outrageous subservience to be possible, would it not, even according to its own principle, hold only for those who make such an engagement, and not for subsequent generations? 'No man can alienate his children (Rousseau spoke with feeling on this point); they are born men and free like himself; their liberty belongs to them; no one has a right to dispose of it except themselves'. Hence every succeeding generation ought to be held 'master to admit or reject' its own bonds. But why does not the same reasoning apply to the successive moments of the life of every individual? It is absurd that the very exercise of a man's will at one moment should constitute a permanent denial of that self-same power of will to him for all time thereafter. Such a thing would be irrational and immoral. 'To renounce one's liberty is to renounce one's character as a man, and one's human rights, and even one's human duties. There is no possible compensation for any one who renounces all. Such a renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man; and it takes away all morality from his actions to take away all the liberty of his will.'

The right of slavery is thus a sheer contradiction of both nature and reason. But another argument for it had been often produced. The doubtful right to enslave others was derived from a more certain right of a conqueror to kill those whom he conquers. Now this prior right itself appears to be such only because of a grave misconception of the nature of war, which Rousseau had discerned in his earlier essays on War and Peace and in the *Project of St. Pierre*. Since war is a relation between States and not between men as individuals, it is only as members of bodies-politic that men become enemies, and duty-bound to do each other hurt. Outside of their political status, as citizens of a State, they cannot possibly have an 'obligation' to kill each other, and so they never have a 'right' to do so. This distinction was itself recognised in the 'laws of war' even in the imperfect

law of nations extant. The action is limited to combatants and to the public forces and property. In a war rightly conducted, a just ruler 'respects the persons and goods of the private individuals: he respects the rights on which his own are founded. The end of war being the destruction of the enemy State, one has a right to kill the defenders of it only so long as they bear arms: but as soon as they give them up and surrender themselves, ceasing then to be enemies or instruments of the enemy, they must be considered to become simply men, and no one has any right to their lives. Sometimes one can kill the State without killing a single one of its members, though in no case does war give any right that is not necessary to its end. These principles are not those of Grotius; they are not founded on the authority of the poets, but they are derived from the nature of things and are founded on reason'. And then an attack was made on the very logic of Grotius and those who followed him. The 'error' had been previously noted by Montesquieu who may have learned it from Aristotle, that writers first suppose a 'right to kill' and then base all other 'right' upon it.¹ This fallacy was now exposed in its nakedness: the right to conquer is supposed to authorise the killing of those who resist the conquest; the right to kill, those who resist justifies, in lieu of the extreme penalty, the right to enslave—all this is a vicious circle, for the original right of conquest is nothing but a right to subject others to one's will, and so the whole thing amounts to a doctrine of brute force without good reason. It may describe the actual 'argument' of practice, where no one is 'bound to obey except in so far as he is forced to it'. But this is simply a concealed state of war and not a moral relationship.²

Every way one looks at it, slavery and right are antithetic and mutually exclusive. The voluntary agreement talked about so piously by Grotius is verily a proposition of this sort: 'I make with thee an agreement that is entirely at thy cost and all to my gain, which I shall observe as long as I care to and thou wilt observe as long as I choose to have thee.'

No bonds of that sort will ever establish a political order that is right. 'There will always be a vast difference between making a mass of men submit and ruling a society. . . . It is, if you like, an aggregation, but not an association. There is neither a public good nor a body-politic.' And Grotius, instead of explaining political society, actually assumed the fact itself in his argument.

¹ Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 10, ch. 3 ('Right of Conquest'); Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1255a. See above, vol. i, pp. 77, 84-5.

² The material of these introductory chapters (chs. 2, 3, 4) is that of chapter 5 of the earlier version ('False Notions of the Social Bond') very much revised.

'A people . . . can give itself to a king. Well, then, according to Grotius, a people is a people before giving itself to a king. That donation is itself a civil action; it presupposes a public deliberation. So before going into the act by which a people elects a king, it would be well to examine the act by which a people is a people, for this act, being necessarily prior to the other, is the true foundation of the society.' If a king be elected to his office of authority, that election, be it unanimous or by majority, is always supposed, in the argument, to be 'binding' upon all in the society—whence comes that obligation to obey, unless we suppose a prior understanding wherein they all agree to bind themselves to the rule of a majority.¹ Thus the proposition is appreciated, *That we must always go back to a first convention*. This is the social contract. Nothing else was entitled to the name, and Rousseau had studiously avoided using it in speaking of the fraudulent arrangement described by Grotius, for he was determined, apparently, to dissociate the term absolutely from the 'chains' and 'slavery' of conquest. The true social pact has to do with bonds that can be justified, bonds compatible with man's inalienable freedom, nay even in furtherance of it.

And thus there was introduced the central concept of this book *The Social Contract*. The earlier version had begun with the independent man questioning the value of the idea of natural right and a natural society of all mankind: what force would general ideas have in the state of nature? Would the universal ideal of right naturally induce men to live in a general fellowship? Is society as it naturally develops ever right? Such questions implied a negative attitude and led on to the solution being proposed in his essay: the right or law which really counts in the lives of men is that which arises from their agreement or convention in forming some particular society amongst themselves, a political society. Rousseau had gone straight to this 'fundamental pact' in the next chapter, and then, having taken his position, refuted the other and false notions of the social bond and contract. But so anxious had he been in his first enthusiasm for his own solution that he cast doubt on some things which he really believed. In opposing the 'natural' to the 'right' he was going against one of his oldest convictions—the double meaning of 'natural' was confusing, the distinction uncertain between what happens in the ordinary course of events and what *ought* to be the order of things. In suggesting that the ideal of natural right had no force in life unless politically sanctioned,

¹ Cf. Grotius, bk. 2, ch. 5, sect. 17, p. 204. 'The whole body, or the major part in the name of the whole body, oblige all and every one of the particular members of the society.'

he implied that morality has no value whatsoever for men otherwise. Furthermore, the religious sanctions had apparently been waved aside: in an affair which has to do with the will of man, the will of God is irrelevant. This was doubtless the influence of the Encyclopedists upon him, and of Diderot in particular, although he was there arguing against 'the philosopher' rather than following him. But this very fact made both that chapter on *The General Society of the Human Race* and the subsequent one on *The Necessity of Positive Laws* unsuitable for his final version. He had since openly broken with the friend involved in these arguments about natural right, and he was not at ease in his own mind about his accusation of a personal betrayal, which he regretted almost as soon as he had made it and which others who had been in his confidence, like Dr. Tronchin, had criticised from his own principles, that no person ought ever to be judge as well as party in any dispute—he had done this very thing himself, they said, when he made public reference to treason without giving the accused a chance to defend himself before the charge was published.¹ And Diderot had suffered set-backs in other quarters, the suppression of the *Encyclopedie* being a great blow to his ambitions in science and letters, and a tide of hostile opinion arising like that in Athens when Aristophanes held the scene and threatened the lives of philosophers—the analogy was Deleyre's, *a propos* of the travesty, *The Philosophers*, with which Palissot was regaling the world. Rousseau had indignantly rejected a complimentary copy of that play and in doing so asserted his deep respect for his old friend.² He would not join with persecutors in any cause, nor countenance them in any form. He wanted the world as well as himself to forget their unhappy falling-out. So this record of his own intellectual controversy with 'the philosopher' (a designation no one at that day could mistake) was not a thing to be made public in this definitive version of his book. And he owed its omission to himself, as well as to Diderot. For he believed differently on some very essential points. He now held that the principle of justice or right is indeed 'innate', and that it has a value in the life of man other than political, in personal relations and in the home; and he had expressed these beliefs in his *Letter to D'Alembert*, *Julie*, and *Émile*. Moreover, he had committed himself wholeheartedly in these later works to the religious sanction of morality, that the love of God is the only sufficiently powerful motive to keep the love of justice and right strong in a social

¹ To Rey, Sept. 13, 1758, *C.G.*, vol. iv, No. 539; from Tronchin, June 6, 1759, No. 646.

² See above, pp. 136–7. From Deleyre, July 7, 1760, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 829.

order in which the love of self has developed into the dominant interest. So his previous doubts, or weakenings, on those beliefs concerning morality and religion, were now intolerable things to recall. It was for all these reasons, perhaps, that the introductory chapter on *The General Society of the Human Race* was, as an entity, simply omitted from this version. It would still be necessary to insist upon the discrepancy between what is natural in the sense of being the common practice and what is right or lawful. But without getting into any debate about the significance of 'natural right' this could be done by discussing those theories where the right of political governance was derived from brute facts of conquest or force—these theories described what was *not* right, and by discussion of them one could bring out the moral right founded on a true Social Contract. The plan of this argument was first made, apparently, in the 'summary' for *Émile*. And so the material of what had been chapter 5 of the early version, *False Notions of the Social Bond*, was revised and now made the introduction to the book.

However, these reasonings of the independent man were the matrix of Rousseau's political thinking, and nothing could be written that would not hark back to them. Thus the present chapter on *The Social Pact* shows the difficulty of the independent man restated in a quite impersonal form. 'How can the forces and the liberty of every one, seeing they are the primary instruments of his own preservation, be engaged by him without hurt to himself and without neglecting the care he owes to himself?' The problem is 'to find a form of association which will defend and protect with all the common force the person and goods of every associate, and in which every one, uniting himself with all, still only obeys himself and remains as free as before'.

The solution is a society formed by a genuinely social agreement. It need not be supposed that the clauses of such a contract are actually enunciated—they are simply those understandings which are 'everywhere tacitly admitted and recognised'. And one thing is certainly understood, that if any of the clauses of the agreement be violated, every party to it is at once released to his own devices. This might make the existence of the society very precarious were it not that the clauses reduce, when properly conceived, to but one: 'the complete alienation of every associate with all his rights to the whole community.'

'For in the first place, every one giving himself wholly, the condition is equal for all; and the condition being equal for all, no one has any interest in making it onerous for others.'

'Further, the alienation being made without reserves, the union is as perfect as it can be, and no associate has anything

more to demand for himself. For if any rights remained peculiar to the individuals, since there is no common superior to pronounce between them and the public, each one, being on some point his own judge, would soon pretend to be so on all points; the state of nature would then exist as before, and the association would necessarily become either tyrannical or futile.

‘Finally, every one, giving himself to all, really gives himself to none in particular; and since there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the very same right that he grants over himself, he gains an equivalent for all that is lost, and more force for preserving what he does have.

‘If, then, we leave out of the social pact what is not essential we will find that it reduces to the following terms: “Each one of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and we receive, as a body, each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”’

And here the independent man is given the assurance he desired, that in being bound to a rule of right he shall not suffer any disadvantage at the hands of others and above all no attainer of his freedom. ‘Whoever refuses to obey the general will is to be constrained to do so by the whole body.’ And then there is added this remark, ‘which signifies nothing else but this, that they will force him to be free. For it is on such a condition alone that a citizen will surrender wholly to his country, that is, only when he is guaranteed against every sort of personal dependence’.

There is a new meaning here, the result of further reflection on man and his true liberty. At the time of writing the earlier version Rousseau was most interested in safeguards against a tyranny from without. He thought of the righteous man practising his virtue at great risk in a society where certain ones had great power and little virtue and inevitably oppressed those whom they could. Even in attaining a conception of the sovereign as all the members who make themselves into one body he could not help speaking in terms of the traditional opposition of ruler and subject and of the ‘respective rights’ of these two parties. In the writings on St. Pierre composed immediately after the first version he made a great point of the discovery that by such projects *rulers* would be ‘forced to be just’, ‘forced to be equitable’, ‘forced to make reason supreme over their passions’. Meantime he learned that the principle applied to his own personal life, that every man alike needs to be ‘made free’ and ‘forced to be master of his own passions’. And at the same time he accustomed himself more and more to the new idea of civil society where there is no personal sovereign but only the whole

body of citizens are sovereign and on their own responsibility. The only person needing to be constrained in such an order is the citizen himself, and every one equally, since it is his will alone that can go astray and be unjust. The sole danger in this ideal republic is from the citizen who lapses from his pledged word and ceases to observe the law to which he is committed in this society of free men. And such departure from the rule of right means that right and liberty in general are threatened. Therefore to constrain a violator to hold fast to the law of their common life is to act on behalf of the general right and liberty. And since this is a common good, a good not only of those who might happen to suffer injury by the violation but also of the very man himself, that constraint has the effect of making him free. It is a guarantee against 'every sort of dependence', that is, against subjection to one's own private interest and passion as well as to the violence or fraud of others. It is moral freedom the independent man will enjoy, as well as freedom from domination and tyranny.

And this was explicitly cited in the reckoning of the benefits of *The Civil State*: 'We might add to what has already been counted as the gains of the civil state a moral freedom which alone makes man truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, and obedience to the law that one has prescribed to oneself is freedom. But I have already said too much on that point, and I am aware that the philosophical meaning of the word freedom is not my subject here.'

The reference elsewhere is to the *Julie* and the *Émile*. And the writing of these works contributed something new to the discussion of what follows, on *The Real Domain*. When teaching Émile the ideas of property, the instructor employed the notion of Locke that property is acquired by labor and by nothing else. This was now used again to explain the title of 'first occupant'. The political body has a right to all the contiguous lands which its members actually appropriate by their labor and use. This is 'the public domain'. It is not a special territory amongst private ones. By the compact every person puts in all his goods and powers, which means all that they can and do appropriate by their own work, and the land they can thus own is the domain of the State. But this account must not be misunderstood. It might seem as if property existed as a 'natural right' of men prior to their forming a community; but as a *right* it has no value except in political society, and private rights are 'entirely subordinate to the right which the community has over all'. Here again it is the moral aspect which reconciles one who loves freedom. The subordination of the citizen and

his right to the whole body might seem unfair or tyrannical unless one realised that 'the fundamental pact . . . substitutes . . . a moral and rightful equality for whatever physical inequality nature may have put among men, and, though they may be unequal in powers and genius, they become all of them equal by agreement and by right'. The First Book closes with this thought which was Rousseau's reply to the disparaging account of the contract given in his own earlier *Discourse on Inequality*. The true social contract means *moral equality*, as well as liberty.

The contract establishes a sovereignty, and one that cannot be too greatly magnified in view of these moral effects. This is the subject of prime concern in the Second Book of the treatise. It had been given only a subsidiary place in the argument of the First Book of the earlier version; now it enjoys a new prominence. And new paragraphs, indeed, wholly new chapters, are devoted to the propositions and questions concerning sovereignty.

The first proposition is *That the sovereignty is inalienable*. Civil society is established for the common good: the common good is that in respect to which the interests of men are no longer opposed but in accord: consequently the right to direct the forces of the State toward this good belongs always and only to the general will. The will of a private party can never possess this right, nor can it be acquired by any manner of transaction, no matter how plausibly it be represented. Thus the sovereignty of the whole body is 'inalienable'. 'It cannot be represented save by itself. The power, in sooth, can be transmitted, but never the will.' While it might be possible that the will of some individual coincides at some time or other with the general will, yet, in view of the natural tendency of a man to look out for himself, the presumption is absolutely against his will being constantly and perfectly in such accord. 'The sovereign can well enough say, therefore, "I want actually what such a one wants, or at least, what he says he wants." But it cannot say, "Whatever that particular man is going to want to-morrow, I shall also want then", since it is absurd that the will shall give itself chains for the future.' To do that would be to serve a master, and therefore the people would cease to be a sovereign people. 'However, that is not saying that the orders of the heads of States cannot *pass* as general wills, so long as the sovereign, being at liberty to take exception to them, does not actually do so. In such a case, from a universal silence, we have to infer the consent of the people.'

Another proposition is *That the sovereignty is indivisible*. Here Rousseau stood with Bodin and Hobbes against a mistaken

doctrine of their opponents, who, fearful of the authority vested in any man or council, talked about dividing the sovereignty so that it could not threaten the liberties and security of the citizens.¹ With the end one could sympathise, but not the means proposed for attaining it. The sovereignty must be treated as always one and indivisible. The will which directs the powers of the State is either general or not—when it is so and is declared, the act is a true ‘act of sovereignty’ and binding on all. In case the will be not general, it is simply that of some private person or other, and it is then without any authority for others, and its declaration is but an ‘act of magistracy’ which is ‘at the best only a decree’. The sovereignty belongs always and only to the whole body and it cannot therefore be divided into parts.

‘But our political thinkers, being really unable to divide sovereignty in its principle, do so in its object. They divide it into force and will, into legislative power and executive power, into rights of taxation, and justice, and war; into internal administration and foreign affairs. They make the sovereign a fantastic being, a being formed of pieces brought together. . . . Then, after having dismembered the social body by a trick worthy of the circus, they assemble all the pieces one knows not how.’ The error is entirely due to their not having ‘exact notions of sovereign authority’. They take ‘what are only emanations’ to be actually ‘parts’ of the supreme authority. Thus they consider acts of making war and peace to be acts of sovereignty when they are ‘solely an application of the law, a particular act which determines the case of the law’, though this is a point which cannot be fully appreciated until the idea of law itself is made clear. But all the so-called ‘different rights of sovereignty’ attributed to certain ones in the community are ‘subordinate to sovereignty, and always presuppose supreme wills to which these rights only give execution’. A similar inexactness had confounded those writers who had tried ‘to judge concerning the respective rights of kings and peoples’, and who divided the sovereignty between them, and usually in some way that would bestow the effective power on the kings without seeming to derogate from the supreme right of the whole people. Thus Grotius paid his court to Louis XIII, and Barbeyrac to George I of England. But they were not impartially reasoning when they thus made so free with the idea of sovereignty—personal interest was mixed in their judgment: ‘truth does not lead to fortune; and the people bestow neither ambassadorships nor chairs nor pensions!’

¹ Bodin, *op. cit.*, bk. 2, ch. 1, p. 266; ch. 7, p. 339. Hobbes citing his agreement with Bodin in these places, *Tripes de Corpore Politico or Elements of Law*, pt. 2 (‘The Nature of the Body-Politic and Civil Laws’), pt. 2, ch. 8, par. 7, vol. iv, p. 206.

This was a piece of sarcasm copied from a fragment written years before in very high indignation at the way in which writers truckled to kings and fell away from the disinterested truth.¹ It was an unfair imputation, however, because those earlier writers had an honest doubt as to the competence of the people as a whole to govern themselves, a doubt encouraged in them by the very classical authors from whom they derived their ideas of the commonwealth. They had a suspicion of 'the popular will' and especially of the understanding or intelligence of the people. As jurists, too, they naturally cherished an ideal of what constitutes a perfect authority, a being 'who can do no wrong'. And they found it more reasonable to conceive of a king endowed with such magnificent powers of mind and will than the whole body of the people. And aside from that Rousseau himself had once committed himself to the view that people in general can never safely cultivate the arts and sciences, but only some few choice spirits. How, then, could the inalienable, indivisible, and perfect sovereignty of the people be seriously maintained? So the next chapter is concerned not with a proposition to be cogently demonstrated, but a question, a matter calling for discussion and inquiry: *Whether the general will can err*. 'It follows from what precedes that the general will is always right and always tends toward public utility: but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people would always have the same rectitude. We always want our own good, but we do not always see it. The people are never corrupted, but often deceived; and it is then only that they appear to will what is bad.' Consequently, a distinction must be made between the general will of the whole body and that which is passed in the actual deliberations of the members, this latter being named 'the will of all'. There is no other practical way of reaching a decision on matters of interest to all than this of counting the voices one way or another. It is true, of course, that the will of every one has regard to private interest whereas the general will has 'regard only to the common interest', whence it follows that in any situation the will of all thus taken can be 'nothing but a sum of private wills'. Nevertheless, those when taken all together—as St. Pierre had suggested—can come to very much the same thing as the general will. 'Take away from these very wills the pluses and minuses that cancel each other, and there remains, as the sum of the differences, the general will.' This is not a very exalted way for the general will to manifest itself. But it is the only practical way men have found, and D'Argenson's *Considerations on the Government of France* is cited in support

¹ Above, vol. i, p. 89.

of this view. It is only through the strife of opposition of interests that the determination of what is the general interest can be made. 'If there were not utterly different interests, we should scarcely be aware of the common interest since it would never find any obstacle to itself—all would go on of its own accord, and politics would cease to be an art.' The conclusion should be, then, that the general will is more likely to emerge if there is the broadest possible basis of suffrage and an absolutely free exercise of their own personal judgment by every individual in the State. In so far as men group themselves within the body-politic they diminish the number of free opinions, and therewith the likelihood of arriving at a right decision. And if any of those associations happens to become dominant, by force of numbers, and overweighs all the others in the State, then it is but one voice that decides, and it expresses not the general will, but a private one with a special interest. Hence 'it is important, in order to have the general will properly enunciated, that there shall not be any partial society in the State, and that every citizen shall think for himself. . . . But if there happen to be partial societies, then it is necessary to multiply their number and guard against any inequality amongst them.'

That recommendation was aimed at the dominance of the Church, which was then very much on Rousseau's mind. In the earlier article on 'Political Economy' he had mentioned lesser associations within the body-politic, and the wills of such groups, without fear of such organisations. Since then, however, he had realised the profound difficulty of instituting a government in a republican State, because such a body acquires a will and interest of its own which needs to be properly subordinated. But a government was an inescapable necessity and the provision for its control another great problem. Then there was brought to his attention a similar danger in the power of an intolerant Church over opinion and belief—to eliminate that he entertained the notion of instituting a civil religion which would set the citizen free to have none other except that of the State. Another alternative would be to multiply the religious bodies so that no dominant voice in the control of belief could exist. Whatever measures be taken, the question is one of really eliciting the general will without any deception of the people who constitute the sovereign power. 'When directed by the general will that power of the body-politic is absolute over all its members.'

This absolute sovereignty raises some further questions, with which Rousseau had already reckoned in his earlier version. What of 'the respective rights of the citizens and the sovereign?'

What about the distinction between 'the duties of the subject' and 'the natural right' of man as man? Once a chapter was devoted to this discussion. But the matter ought not to be formulated in such terms of opposition between sovereign and citizen and between man and citizen. It is a question rather of *The Limits of the Sovereign Power*. And here the positive aspect of sovereignty must be affirmed. 'While it is understood that all that each one alienates of his power, goods and liberty by the social pact is the part thereof whose use is of importance to the community, still (and this is the new point in the chapter) it must also be granted *that the sovereign alone is judge of that importance*.'¹ Hence the citizen owes his services to the State whenever the sovereign demands them. On the other hand, the sovereign simply cannot impose burdens useless to the whole community—'it cannot even will to do that'. So limits to sovereign power do exist, limits inherent in its own nature. It cannot exist save as a power directed by the general will for the good of the community. If the direction is otherwise, or for ends other than the general good, the power is not sovereign, and the citizens are not in the least obliged to obey. It is this double generality of the will and the objects of its action that distinguishes the true sovereignty from false pretensions of authority. These two conditions are thus very real limits to that absolute power—it cannot act save by 'general accords'. Its supreme right rests on that foundation, and all the rights the citizens have rest on the same foundation, which is thus the basis of all rights whatsoever.

This means the sovereign right is not limited by any so-called 'natural right' as thinkers had so often maintained. Rousseau made this point clear in a new chapter on *The Right of Life and Death*. The 'right of nature' has usually been understood to consist of a right to one's own life which no political arrangement could touch. Now by the terms of the contract each one puts his *life* as well as his powers and goods in common under the supreme direction of the general will. Here was a question of the greatest importance for his view: are life and death rightly subordinate to the sovereign, as well as all the other belongings of men in their political society? An argument presents itself at once against such a thought. Since the individuals have no right themselves to dispose of their own lives they cannot convey such a right to the sovereign. But the question is wrongly put. Every one has the right to risk his own life in order to save it. 'Now the social pact has for its end the preservation of the

¹ This chapter on *The Limits of Sovereign Power* (bk. 2, ch. 4) was a revision of chapter 6 (bk. 1) of the earlier version, entitled *The Respective Rights of the Sovereign and the Citizen*. I have italicised the new and added matter.

contracting parties.' That being its general end, they must be presumed to will all the means necessary to attain the end. Life in a society always involves some risks, and even losses, and everyone must take his chances. 'Whoever wants to keep his own life at the cost of others ought to give it for them, too, when it is necessary.' And once more, *'the citizen himself is no longer judge of the peril to which the law ordains he shall expose himself.'* The judge is now 'the prince'—a startling variant, as if it were a slip of the tongue for 'sovereign'. But it was intentional. The sovereign cannot order particular persons to do any particular service without losing its authority: and to appoint certain members of the body to risk their lives for the community is to issue just such a particular command. If that is to be done, as it must, it is the task of 'the prince' who acts in an intermediate capacity between the sovereign and the citizen. The point is so new, however, that Rousseau is compelled to plead with his reader for leniency: 'all my ideas hang together, but I can't set them forth all at once.' The further elucidation of the idea awaits the book on Government. Meantime what is here asserted is the right which the sovereign must be conceived to have over the life and death of any of its members. It is this right that authorises the punishment of criminals, without which every sort of civil right and liberty would be always in jeopardy: and no man would think of committing himself to a society without such safeguards. 'It is only because we do not want to fall victim to some assassin that we consent to die if we ever do become one. . . . In the agreement, so far from disposing of our own life, we are thinking solely about guaranteeing it; and it is not to be presumed that any of the contractants at that time purposes to get himself hanged.' Furthermore, every man who violates the right of life that is guaranteed all by the power of the whole body is really attacking the whole order of 'social right' and thereby becomes a traitor and rebel, and indeed makes war on the State, and consequently deserves the penalty. 'Then it may truly be said that the right of war comes into play which says that one is to kill the vanquished.' So much for the right as such. Yet, though it undoubtedly exists, one is not always well advised to employ it to the full. The frequency and severity of punishments are always a sign of weakness or inactivity on the part of the State. And the moralist, conscious of his own defects, put in a word for the guilty: 'There is no man so bad that he cannot be made good for something. One has no right to put to death, even as an example, any one who can be saved without danger.' Hence the sovereign has the right as well to dispense mercy, although this dispensing power,

as commonly employed by those charged with its administration, only results in a breaking down of all integrity and justice. Here again, however, it went against the grain to plead the cause of a rigor enforced by some mundane judge or magistrate: 'But I feel my own heart murmur, and stop my pen: let us leave these questions to be discussed by the just man who has never failed and who has never had need of grace for himself.'

The great question of Law still awaited treatment. The 'summary' for *Émile* indicated Rousseau's dissatisfaction with all existing notions of it. There was one such, for example, of laws of justice or right hailing from God and discernible by the pure, unimpassioned reason of the sage. But this metaphysical law was not relevant to an order of things where men are not all wise philosophers in life as well as thought. As the independent man had claimed, those righteous persons who observe these natural or divine laws will certainly pay too dearly for their honesty unless protected by laws which are made and supported by the power of the whole community. The important law for this situation is political law, the law of the State.¹ But what is such a law? This is deduced from the nature of the sovereignty and its proper action. Sovereignty is a power in the whole body to act for the general good under the direction of the general will. There cannot be a general will, however, with respect to any particular persons or interests, since this means favoring some and obliging others unequally, which in effect divides the whole body into two parts, breaks up the union and annihilates the authority and the obligation. 'But when all the people lay down a rule for all the people, they consider only themselves, and if any relation obtains, it is between the entire object from one point of view and the entire object from another, without any division of the whole. Then the matter on which they are determining is general, like the will that makes the determination. It is that act which I call a law.' Consequently, law must refer abstractly to objects and actions, without ever specifying any individual or particular deed. It can be ordained by law that such and such privileges or prerogatives, especially of government, be established, but never the persons who are to have them. From the point of view of the agent, it must be

¹ Thus briefly Rousseau dispatched the notion of natural law and right to which he had previously devoted his chapters in the early version, *The Necessity of Positive Law* (bk. 1, ch. 7) and *The Nature of the Laws and The Principle of Civil Justice* (bk. 2, ch. 4). He omitted the eloquent tribute to Law in the former (Vaughan, vol. i, p. 475), having already published it in his article on *Political Economy* (ibid., p. 245) and he omitted entirely the derivation of the principle of justice or natural right from man's experience of law and justice in the State. Above, vol. i, pp. 113, 177-82.

observed that the laws cannot be the work of any special persons but solely of the whole body, and that no one, not even the prince, stands above them. So established, they cannot be unjust for any one. And man is free though subject to them, since they are but the register of his own will. Such a régime of law is fundamental and must not be confused with decrees issued by chiefs of State, which are acts of government and very different in their significance. 'I call every State, then, a *Republic*, which is ruled by the laws, under whatever form of administration it might be, for only then does the public interest govern and the public weal mean something. All lawful government is republican: I will explain after this what is meant by *Government*.'¹

Before going on to this new material Rousseau repeated what he had written in the early version concerning *The Legislator* and *The People*. 'The general will is always right, but the judgment directing it is not always enlightened.' When people are in accord on the matters of interest to all, their will is right as far as they are concerned, and yet they may need to be 'taught to know what it is they want'. The man of vision must be invoked here to instruct the people as to their true needs and goods; and the people must be ready to accept their statesman and his judgment, for it is only by doing so they will achieve a good body of laws or legislation. This suitability of the leaders and the people is of great importance. Russia was a case of misfit, with Peter the Great trying to imitate the régime of European monarchies and ignoring the native practices and ways of the people. Incidentally, the present monarch was flattering some of the Encyclopedists with offers to come and assist in the reform of that State, and Rousseau ventured to predict catastrophe as a result of any more such attempts to establish a grand monarchy. 'The Empire of Russia would like to subjugate Europe; and it will be subjugated itself. The Tartars, its subjects, or its neighbors, will become its masters and ours as well. The revolution appears to me inevitable. All the kings of Europe work in concert to hasten it.' But at the end of another passage some hope of a new and republican order in Europe was seen. It appeared in a very modest quarter, and needed to be fostered: 'There is still in Europe a country capable of being given a new constitution: it is the island of Corsica. The valor and constancy with which that brave people have been able to recover and defend their liberty would well deserve some wise man's showing them how to preserve it. I have a

¹ This definition recalls that of the true city in Aristotle's *Politics* (bk. 3, ch. 6, 1279a), tr. W. Ellis, 'all those governments which have a common good in view are rightly established and just . . . a city is a community of free men'.

kind of presentiment that some day that little island will astonish all Europe.' But it was not his business in this work to develop the dream of a universal order of republics in Europe like that fancied by Fénelon and St. Pierre. One must remember, with Montesquieu, that there will always be *Diverse Systems of Legislation*, though indeed no system can depart from the true end of law, which is 'liberty and equality'. Rousseau added to what he had already said on this point the statement: 'It is precisely because the force of events always tends to destroy equality that the effort of legislation ought always to maintain it.'

The laws of a people fall into various groups, distinguished in *The Division of the Laws*—civil, political, criminal, and last and most important 'customs, morals, and especially opinion', on which all the others really depend for their efficacy, and the very constitution of the State itself. It was on this characteristic theme the Second Book closed. But Rousseau, the inquirer into politics, had still further questions to solve, questions that continued to haunt him after attaining his moral conception of authority and obligation in the life of men in society. These were practical questions, and unless they were met all else would be visionary. In a political society there must be an application of the law and the power of the body-politic to the individuals who are its members. This is not the action of law itself; it is where men come into the scheme. Government is in detail an affair of certain persons who are given the power to act for the whole body. No venture of ingenious mankind is more full of hazard. Even if one conceives of the governing body as simply officers or administrators, not as the pretentious 'sovereigns' of actual history, it is a question how to make sure that their employment of the public forces shall always conform to the general will. It is even a problem how any such agent for the whole body can be lawfully set up to exercise such powers. And how, further, is the action of government to be conceived in the republican order where nothing is right unless it is the whole acting on the whole, the sovereign on the members generally who all together form the sovereign? Such were the difficulties that had continued to beset Rousseau after even his first draft of his essay. And when the *Social Contract* was summarised for the *Émile*, these questions as to the institution and control of government were detailed first and then a chapter-long disquisition came, obviously the solution to them all, at last attained and formulated. It is this very material that now stands at the *beginning* of Book Three, the chapter *On Government in General*, in such wise that the solutions follow as deductions from general principles there established. And as before,

the reader was called upon to 'read deliberately' because this chapter was difficult and all-important.

A government is essentially an intermediate body, standing between the subjects and the sovereign and charged with the public administration, the execution of the laws and the maintenance of both civil and political liberty. It may consist of one or more members, called magistrates or kings, or more simply 'governors'. This body of magistrates considered as an entity is 'the prince', and in its active role is called 'the government'. Those writers who had refused to see any contract in the subjection of the people to their chiefs were certainly in the right, because the rule of such chiefs is 'absolutely nothing but a commission, an employment, in which, as simple officers of the sovereign, they exercise in its name the power of which it has made them the depositaries, and which it can limit, modify, and take back whenever it so desires, the alienation of such a right being incompatible with the nature of the social body, and contrary to the purpose of the association'. Government is thus the lawful exercise of executive power which is only delegated for a time. But what defines this 'lawful exercise'? The position of the government itself determines this—it is an 'intermediary' between the whole people as sovereign and the whole people considered as so many individual subjects, and its 'mean' position suggests its true role. Or rather it was the *Politics* of Aristotle which suggested the solving principle when it treated of the 'proper power' of a lawful king and defined this as a power 'sufficient to make the king superior to any one person or even a large part of the community, but inferior to the whole. . . .'¹

The 'proper power' of any administration may be fixed in terms of a continuous proportion where the sovereign is to the government as the government is to the people who are subject to its control. The magistrate receives his orders from the sovereign people and transmits them to the people as simple members of the State. There ought always, then, to be an equality between the product of the mean by itself and that of the two extremes. The forces of the government must always be such that their superiority of action over the citizens is neither greater nor less than the product of the forces of the citizens taken as individuals and the forces of the citizens as a sovereign body. Then is the State in 'good equilibrium'. Any disturbance of that proportional relationship is fatal to the political society. 'If the sovereign wants to govern, or if the prince wants to give the laws, or if the subject refuses to obey, disorder

¹ *Pol.*, bk. 3, ch. 15, 1286b, tr. W. Ellis.

takes the place of true rule, the force and the will no longer act in concert, and the State, dissolved, falls thus into despotism or anarchy.'

The right order of things is, however, entirely relative to each State and cannot be determined without regard to the specific conditions: 'since there is but one mean proportional for every relationship between the subjects and the sovereign, there must be one and only one government that is proper or good in a State at any one time. However, a thousand circumstances will change the relationships of a people so that different governments will be good for different peoples, and even for the same people, at different times.' But the working of the principle may be envisaged as regards the factor of the number of the people, which is easier to reckon with than most of the others. Suppose the State consisted of 10,000 citizens. They would constitute a sovereign people with the power of 10,000 men. Considered as individuals, however, each has only $\frac{1}{10,000}$ th part of that 'sovereign authority', although each is wholly subject to all that authority. Now let their number be greater, and their subjection will be correspondingly greater. The first consequence to note here is that by the very nature of things 'the larger the State gets, the more liberty diminishes'. But this is not the only change. 'The less the private wills have a bearing on the general will, that is to say, the morals on the laws (presumably the case in a larger State), the more the repressive force ought to increase. Then the government, to be good, ought to be relatively stronger, in proportion as the people are more numerous. On the other hand, since the size of the State gives to the depositaries of the public authority more temptations, and means of abusing the authority, the more force the government has for the control of the people, the more the sovereign ought to have in turn for controlling the government.' Such true deductions show that this principle of proportion is not an arbitrary invention of some writer, but a principle necessary by the very nature of the State. They also illustrate the fact that there cannot be only one right and absolute government, but as many forms of government as there are variations in the size of States or in any other respect.

But someone might try to hold this principle up to ridicule, as if it were only necessary to take the square root of the number of the people to determine the size of the government! Now the illustration reckoning with the number of people has been taken merely as one example—it happens to be the factor of importance for the subsequent question concerning the divers forms of government. Further, 'the relations of which I speak are not only

measured by the number of men, but, generally speaking, by the quantity of action, which combines itself by multitudes of causes; and besides, if, to express myself in the fewest possible words, I draw for a moment upon the terms of geometry, I am not unaware, for all that, that geometric precision has no place in moral quantities'—a reply not unlike that made by Aristotle himself when discussing his principles of the mean in moral action. Practically speaking, what we are calculating is the relative influences of the wills of men on each other in a political society, and we are trying to find out what relation ought to obtain between the individuals, the sovereign, and the government. The relationship of the citizen to the sovereign has been made clear through the discussion of the pact and the law-making. It is that of the intermediary body of the government which is here being considered—and the point to keep in mind is this: 'The government is in miniature what the body-politic that embraces it is in the large. It is a moral person indued with certain faculties and, like the sovereign, it is an active thing, and like the State a passive one; and we can analyse out other analogies.' Consequently, there is the same question of control for this lesser body as for the body-politic, and the problem of finding the right proportion between the various tribunals of government and the members who compose it, so that each magistrate has his due place and authority within the régime, and some magistrate is chief or supreme in the system.

Without going more deeply into this economy of the administration itself it is sufficient to see that here is another body, distinct at once from the sovereign and the people, acting as a go-between, and having a will of its own. Of course, 'the dominant will of the prince is or ought to be nothing other than the general will or the law, and its force is nothing but the public force concentrated in it'. Were any action attempted independently of the general will, by means of the force of the public body, it would be invalid and a threat to the bonds of the State. If, indeed, such activity on the part of the prince were relatively more prominent than that of the sovereign, a situation would result where two sovereigns would exist, one of right, the other of fact; and at that instant the social union would disappear and the whole body-politic would be dissolved. This danger of usurpation and ruin had inspired writers mistakenly to prevent the government having a full competence, by dividing the powers so that they could not be thus employed. 'However, in order that the body of the government shall have a real life which distinguishes it from the body of the State,

and that all its members shall be able to act in concert and serve the purpose for which it is instituted, there must be a particular *self*, a common sensibility among its members, a force, a will of its own which looks out for its own preservation. Such existence as a definite being presupposes assemblies, councils, a power to deliberate, to decide, and rights, titles, privileges, pertaining exclusively to the prince so as to make the condition of the magistrate more honorable in proportion to its troubles. The difficulties are in the manner of ordering this subaltern whole within the larger body, in such wise that in strengthening its own constitution it does not alter at all that of the general body, and that it always distinguishes its particular force, designed for its own preservation, from the public force destined to preserve the State—in a word, that it be always ready to sacrifice the government to the people, and not the people to the government. Moreover, while the artificial body of the government is the work of another artificial body and has so to speak only a borrowed and subordinate life, still these facts do not prevent its power to act with more or less vigor or celerity, to enjoy, as it were, a condition of health more or less robust. Indeed, without departing directly from the purpose for which it is set up, it can be allowed a certain leeway of action according to the manner in which it is constituted.’ To these variations are due the different relationships that may be observed between the government and the State, and it sometimes follows from neglect of these that the best government becomes the worst.

We must seek, however, *The principle which constitutes the diverse forms of government*. First of all to note is the distinction between ‘the prince’ and ‘the government’, the passive and the active body, composed of a certain number of members. According to the principle employed in regard to the State at large, the active force of the government must bear a relation to the number of magistrates who compose the prince. Since the total public force available for the governance of a body-politic is here a constant, if the magistrates increase in number, the government has the added work of their control amongst themselves, and ‘the more it uses of that (public force) on its own members, the less there remains for it to use on all the people. So the more numerous the magistrates, the feebler is the government’. This is a ‘fundamental maxim’, and must be made perfectly clear. In the person of each magistrate there are three wills to be distinguished, first the will proper to the individual self, that makes him look out for his own advantage, then the will in common with the magistrates, which has regard to the maintenance of their status in the community, a ‘corporate

will', and lastly the will of the people or 'the sovereign will' which is entirely general both in respect to the State and to the government as part of it. In a perfect order of things the private will of the magistrate should be entirely subordinate to both the corporate will of the prince and to the general will of the people. But in actual affairs everything is contrary to the true order. The more concentrated a will is the stronger influence it has. The general will is thus weakest, the will of the body of magistrates considerably stronger, and the private will is actually dominant over all. In the government, then, every member is first of all himself, then the magistrate, and lastly the citizen. From such an analysis one can explain a number of phenomena. If the government is in the hands of one man there is a union of both the corporate and personal wills, making for the greatest possible power and activity. On the other hand, if the whole people act as magistrates, the corporate will of government is dissipated into a will of the generality which has the least possible degree of force, and then the private will of every individual is given free rein and, as it is phrased later in the chapter on *Democracy*, there is 'a governance without government'—the ancients would have said 'anarchy'. Another phenomenon is explained. A magistrate has relatively more active influence in the body of which he is a member than the ordinary citizen has in the body-politic at large, and hence it follows that a personal will has much greater influence in acts of government than in those of the sovereignty—in short, there is greater possibility of selfish power in government than in making laws of the land. Moreover, if the State grows larger, the real force available for government is augmented, though this is never in exact correspondence with the extent of territory, but if the magistrates also tend to increase in number, the effect is to diminish the relative force of the government for the enlarged State. As the State increases, therefore, it is necessary to narrow down the government to the rule of one man, which is the only way to deal expeditiously and effectively with the new situation. A maxim follows from this: the ratio of the number of the magistrates to the government ought to be inversely that of the subjects to the sovereign, or, put otherwise, the larger the State the more the government must be narrowed down, so that the number of magistrates diminishes as the population increases. This maxim must not be misconstrued. It has to do only with the internal competence of government. 'I speak here only of the force of government relative to its members, and not of its rectitude. For on the contrary, the more numerous are the magistrates, the more does the will of their body approximate to the general will. . . . So we

lose on the one side what we gain on the other, and the art of the legislator is to know how to fix the point where the force and the will of government, which are always in reciprocal proportion, are combined in the relationship which is of the greatest value to the State.'

It is from the above considerations that one can understand why it is that the number of members has been taken as the basis of distinction, in *The Division of Governments*. The division is usually threefold, according as the government is the few, the majority, or one man. For the small state, democratic government is best; for the very large one, monarchic; and for those of middling size, the aristocratic, although here again it is not mere numbers alone that determine the form, but 'a multitude of circumstances'.

Consider *Democracy*. 'He who makes the law knows better than any one how it ought to be executed and interpreted.' What more reasonable, then, than to join to the legislative power of the people the executive as well? But it is unwise. This combining of the two functions obliterates the very important distinction between the acts of the prince and those of the sovereign, between attention to particular matters and persons, and to 'general views' concerning the whole State. 'Nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests in public affairs; and the abuse of the laws by the government is less an evil than the corruption of the legislator which is the infallible result of taking particular views. The State is then altered in its very substance, and all reform becomes impossible. . . .' However, 'to take the term in its strict meaning, there never has existed any veritable democracy, and never will. It is contrary to the natural order of things that the great majority shall govern and the few be governed.'¹ One can at best imagine that the people remain incessantly assembled to busy themselves with public affairs, and one can easily see that they could not set up any commissions to attend to these matters without the form of the government changing'. It is certain that 'when the functions of government are divided among many tribunals, the least numerous ones sooner or later acquire the greatest authority, if only because the facility for expediting matters naturally leads them to it'. Thus only some extraordinary combination of circumstances ever permits of a democratic government—a small State, the people easily assembled, every citizen able to know every other one, a profound simplicity in morals which does away with the necessity of public action and thorny disputes, and a considerable degree of equality between the classes, and

¹ See Deleyre's remark, above, vol. i, p. 243.

little or no luxury. Montesquieu was right enough in saying virtue was the principle of such a polity, since it alone makes most of these prerequisites possible, but he ought to have seen that the same virtue is necessary to any true society no matter what its form of government. The world generally lacks any such communal virtue. And the popular form of government is very liable, as both Aristotle and Machiavelli pointed out, to civil wars and internal disturbance. No government demands 'more vigilance and courage' for its preservation. 'If there were a people of Gods, they would be governed democratically. So perfect a government is not suited to mere men.'¹

In *Aristocracy* two moral persons are to be distinguished, the government and the sovereign, and two general wills, one pertaining to all the citizens, the other only to the officers of the administration. The government may order its own members as it likes, but never the people, except in the name of the sovereign, 'that is to say, in the name of the people themselves: which is something one must never forget'. The primitive form of Aristocracy is the rule of heads of families to whom the younger members defer because of the 'authority of experience itself', which is a 'natural' aristocracy. In time this changes into the form where it is wealth or power rather than age or experience that carries weight, when the authority may be more distinctly recognised as such and aristocracy is 'elective'. Another form comes when the authority of power is thought to pass from father to son—hereditary aristocracy. Of these three types the elective is the best, and truest to the name 'aristocracy' because it admits of veritable excellence. This form has the intrinsic merit of emphasising the very important distinction between the two powers, the executive and the legislative. It also has the advantage of introducing the element of choice whereby such qualities as probity, knowledge, experience and all the other grounds of preference and public merit may constitute the title to office. Furthermore when there is a senate of chosen men, they can assemble with ease, discuss policies and expedite them in an orderly and careful way, whereby the State enjoys a standing among foreign powers. 'In a word it is the best and most natural order that the wisest shall govern the many, when one is sure that they will govern for the good of the many and not for their own good. . . . But we must take note that the corporate interest here begins to direct the public force somewhat less in accord with the rule of the general will, and that another inevitable tendency takes force from the laws to the advantage of the executive power.' While the conditions favorable to

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1292b, 1301a; 1304b–1305a; 1318b.

aristocratic government are not so exacting as in the case of democracy, there must at least, as Greek writers showed, be moderation in wealth, and contentment among the poor. Aristotle had seen an advantage of wealth in that it gave some men the leisure to give their attention to public affairs, which Rousseau unfairly criticised as meaning that the rich ought always to have the preference.¹

In *Monarchy* the prince is not a corporate but a natural person. He is one man who has at his disposal all the forces of the State and the whole government. All actions there have a single and efficient direction because no opposing forces exist within the government itself. The monarch governs his vast estates like Archimedes sitting calmly on a bank and putting a great ship in motion. No government has greater vigor, since in no other does a personal will have such a chance to dominate the situation. All cooperates toward a single end. That seems very fine until we realise that 'the end is not in the least that of the happiness of the public, and that the very forcefulness of the administration turns unceasingly to the prejudice of the State'. For kings all want to be absolute. To be sure they may hear from afar the voices of those who advise them to win over their people because their real strength is in such love of their subjects—but all that is smiled at in courts. A power of that sort is too conditional. 'The best kings want to be able to be wicked if they please, without ceasing, on that account, to be masters.' Preach to them as some had done, that it is really to their own advantage to make their people flourishing, numerous, and strong, still they know well enough this does not advance their own purposes. 'It is their personal interest, first and foremost, to have the people weak and for ever unable to resist them.' Of course, if the people were indeed always submissive, it would be to the advantage of kings to make them strong and happy as well, since they would then have at their disposal a more valiant machine than ever for the attainment of their ends. But in general they cannot rely on such submissiveness, and so they follow the maxim of making themselves strong at the expense of the people, exactly as Samuel pointed out to the Hebrews, and likewise Machiavelli to the moderns, for 'in pretending to give advice to Kings, he has given very good advice to peoples. The *Prince* of Machiavelli is the book for republicans.' But there are certain conditions which favor monarchy, and the first is when the State is one of great size. If the administration of such a State were to consist of a very large number of officers, the distinction between the prince and the subjects would be too

¹ *Pol.*, 1309a.

nearly obliterated to make the government authoritative; contrariwise, if the administration were narrowed down to a very few, or to one man alone, the inequality of rank would be so extreme indeed that no relationship at all might be said to obtain between the prince and the people, and the State would lack the tie of a government.¹ Of course, it would be the motive of any king to place himself as much above the people as possible, yet not so much that he would be out of all relation with them. Hence it is necessary to have intermediary orders, *grandeess*, nobles, and others to preserve his supremacy without loss of all ties and connection between himself and the people. It is only a large State that can support such a vast apparatus of ranks and degrees and orders. Only such a State, moreover, comports with the monarchic ambition in chiefs. Nevertheless, since one man cannot do everything by himself, the monarch appoints substitutes for himself, which spells trouble in such a government. It is an 'essential and inevitable defect' of monarchy as compared with 'republican government' (implicitly denying in this comparison that a monarchic polity could ever be a republic, that is, a society where the law is supreme), that the places of highest rank in the former are generally filled by contemptible little plotters, and rascals whose ineptitude is remarked by all the world, whereas the public voice almost never raises any of the people to such position unless they are 'enlightened and capable'. 'The people is decidedly less deceived than the prince in making its choice; and a man of real merit is almost as rare in the ministry as a sot is at the head of a republican government. So when, by some happy chance, one of these men born to govern takes the helm of affairs in a monarchy that is almost ruined already by such swarms of petty dabblers, one is altogether surprised at the resources he finds, and then there is an epoch in that country.'² These observations Rousseau sent in while the book was actually going through the press—the special compliment of the last sentence was intended for the minister Choiseul but unluckily it was not recognised as such, and afterwards Rousseau paid for what he unwisely said in condemnation of the ministers of monarchies. It was one of his impulsive and fateful departures from the maxim of avoiding all personalities and satire.

¹ The argument here seems to hark back to early studies in Hobbes, for the government itself is spoken of as the tie or bond of union in the State, whereas Rousseau's own distinctive theory is that the *social* bond obtains without the agency of government. See above, vol. i, pp. 140 ff.

² The exalting of the choices of the public reflects the opinion of Montesquieu and Aristotle, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 2, ch. 2, p. 194; *Pol.*, bk. 3, ch. 11, 1281a-b; 1282a-b, and above, vol. i, pp. 152-4, 170-3.

Barring that, the argument kept to general considerations. To be well governed, a monarchical State must have its size and extent proportionate to the capacity of him who governs. 'It is much easier to conquer than to rule.' A sustained effort is required which takes the full measure of a ruler. Indeed, it would seem necessary for the State itself to expand or contract with every ruler on the throne, according to his capacity. This is a disadvantage of monarchy as compared with aristocracy where 'the talents of a Senate have more constant value'. The lack of continuity in the succession is likewise a defect, for the changes in policy are too abrupt, and in case the king is elective, there is always likely to be a terrific controversy within the State. Thus it is men have generally settled on the system of hereditary succession. This often does provide tranquillity, but it is no security as to wise government. Everything in the education of a young prince destined for a throne tends to deprive him of justice and reason: he himself ought to learn first to obey, as the Greeks taught, but from the start he is minded to be his own master, and the result is that every new king means a change of policy. 'So one sees that in general while there is more ruse in a court, there is more wisdom in a Senate, and Republics proceed to their objectives according to views that are more constant and better prosecuted. . . . ' To be sure the apologists of royalty are always ready with their defense. They picture the fickle princelings of fact as wise fathers of their families who know and always do what is best; they lard him over with all the attributes of a perfectly beneficent being, 'always supposing the prince is what he ought to be'. Thus they play up monarchy as an ideal order. Plato, in his *Statesman*, had really described the ideal monarch, a rare personage indeed, and worthy of his high estate. But we are concerned with the government of men as they are, and the general run of kings, and the influence of their education and position on the actual conduct of public affairs. Considering these, the decision must be absolutely against monarchy. One who thus judges ill of this form of government is often advised 'to obey without murmuring'. Edifying that, but useless advice, since every one knows it is necessary to suffer under a bad government. The question here in concern is what government is a good one.¹

In point of fact the choice of governments is never between the three pure forms. A single ruler must work through

¹ The continual pitting of Monarchy against Republics (with aristocratic government) and the citing of Plato's *Statesman* seems to identify this material with what Rousseau had written at the time of his *Discourse* and the *Political Economy*. He was here propagandist, and off the question of his book, as he noted himself, though without revising the chapter accordingly.

'subaltern magistrates', as Aristotle had observed, and St. Pierre following him.¹ And a democracy or popular government must have its 'chiefs of State'. In either case the executive power of the government is really shared with a body of officers who constitute in effect the real government, whether they derive their office from a monarchy or by commission from the people. The sharing of the executive functions between the king or the people and their respective agents may take place with differing degrees of dominance of the former. Sometimes there is an equal apportionment, when the constituent parts of the government stand in a relation of mutual dependence on each other, as in England, or when each part is independent, but imperfectly so, as in Poland, although this is a bad form 'because there is no unity whatsoever in the government, and the State lacks bonds'.² A simple government in this respect is always preferable because it is simple and more effectual. But there are cases when the executive power is not in a proper and subordinate relation to the legislative power of the sovereign, and here the remedy is to divide the executive so that while its several parts still exercise a real 'authority over the subjects', yet 'their division of power makes them, when all taken together, less strong against the sovereign'. In this particular case the division of power is entirely in order. Another means, however, is to set up 'intermediate magistrates' who by their very number serve to diminish the relative strength of the government without breaking it up into distinct parts—in this case the government is said to be 'tempered'.³ However, the institution of new magistracies is not always valuable for diminishing the relative strength of the government to the sovereign. It is the practice sometimes in democracies, to strengthen the government by 'erecting some tribunals to concentrate it'. For simple democracy is the weakest, as pure monarchy is the strongest, form; and a movement toward a mixed form may often be the best thing, resulting in a mean form which is most satisfactory. But such matters can never be decided without reference to other determining factors, and so a chapter is devoted to the proposition that *Not every form of government is suited to every country*, a theme very prominent in Montesquieu and Aristotle.

'Liberty not being the fruit of all climates is not in the grasp of all peoples.' Thus Montesquieu had observed, drawing atten-

¹ *Pol.*, bk. 3, ch. 16, 1287b; St. Pierre cited above, vol. i, pp. 191, 214-15.

² This criticism of Poland led to a subsequent task for the author; see below, Chapter XXII.

³ This material was obviously at hand at the time of writing the first version of the *Social Contract*, cited above, vol. i, pp. 163, 185.

tion to the economy of the State in its environment.¹ The public person or government is a 'consumer and not a producer' in an economic sense. There must be resources available for it, then, and these can come only from the excess of what is made by the hands of the people. How much they can supply depends on the conditions of soil, the nature of the labor, the quantity of provision necessary for themselves in their particular climate and location. Some governments necessarily require more than others. The farther the contributions have to come, the more burdensome they are to the people, not on account of their quantity but because of the long route taken before the goods they give up return to them in the form of the benefits of government. The prosperity of a country depends on the 'circulation' of goods. When it is 'prompt and well-established', the amount paid in by the citizens makes no difference, since they enjoy the returns straightway. However little a people might give, on the other hand, they are always poor if they never see it again in public services. It is a principle of political economy, then, that the greater the distance between the government and the people, the more onerous the tribute becomes. And this applies especially to monarchy, the form suited to great empires; it is the most costly, and its cost is most grievously felt. Here is a remarkable difference, once more, between 'free States' (the phrase is direct from Aristotle) and 'monarchical ones', that 'in the former all is employed on the common utility, in the latter, the public and private forces are in reciprocal relations so that one increases by means of a weakening of the other. In fine, despotism, instead of governing the subjects in order to make them happy, renders them wretched in order to govern'.² Aside from this dangerous application, however, the essential point is that the form of government which suits any country depends on such natural causes as climate, which determine fundamentally what resources there are available for the support of a government. Where a great abundance exists at little cost in the way of labor, a monarchy is natural, and, incidentally, the moralist was willing to allow it a good thing, 'for it is better that the excess be absorbed by the government than dissipated by the individual'. Generally speaking, warm countries are favorable to despotism, temperate ones to free states. A warm country needs fewer inhabitants for its development and yet

¹ This chapter is an essay on political economy, and it may have been written in some form or other at the time of the article for the *Encyclopédie*. See Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 13 ('Des Rapports que la levée des tributs et la grandeur des revenus publics ont avec la liberté'); bk. 18 ('Des Lois et des rapports qu'elles ont avec la nature du terrain').

² See Aristotle on the question of revenues, *Pol.*, bk. 6, ch. 5, 1320a.

can support more of them than a cold country, which is all favorable to despotism.¹ The more widely dispersed the population are, the more difficult it is for them to come together and revolt. When people are more drawn together in great numbers, as in colder countries, 'the less the government can get the better of the sovereign'. The leaders of the people are just as able to hold their deliberations in chambers as are the princes and their councils, and the people can assemble as soon as the troops. It is only where there are vast distances, sparsely populated, that tyrannical rule has its natural habitat: 'only wild beasts reign in the deserts'. And this was being written in the cooler clime of France, at the forest of Montmorency, and near the densely settled city of Paris!

But Rousseau stopped there and changed to the subject of *The Marks of Good Government*. These had been variously specified by writers. Those accustomed to living as subjects extolled public tranquillity, whereas citizens of a free State spoke out for 'the liberty of the individuals'. The true mark is astonishingly simple and readily deduced from the above principles. 'What is the end of the political association? It is the preservation and prosperity of its members. And what is the surest sign of their living and prospering? Their number and population.² Don't go looking all about for this mark that is so much disputed. Everything else being equal, the government under which, without extraneous means (without naturalisation, without colonies), the citizens people the land and multiply, that government is unmistakably the best. That under which a people diminishes and perishes is the worst. Calculators, it is now your affair: count, measure, compare.' Too many had admired those periods when arts and letters flourished and chiefs were at their ease whilst the people enjoyed these things. They had rather scorned republics for their liability to disturbance. But that is not necessarily fatal to prosperity. 'A little agitation gives vigor to souls, and what makes the species truly prosper is less peace than liberty.'

This was somewhat in the vein of the melancholy reflections of the early *Discourses*, and the following chapter continued that vein of thought: *On the Abuse of Government and its Tendency to Degenerate*. It was, of course, a classic theme—every great book on politics since the Greeks had pictured the inevitable descent of man.³ But the reasons here were those of Rousseau's own

¹ Cf. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 21, ch. 3.

² Cf. Diderot, article *Législateur*, vol. xv, p. 422: 'Le peuple heureux se multiplie et l'extrême population devient une cause nouvelle de sécurité et de bonheur.'

³ Aristotle, *Pol.*, bk. 5, chs. 1-7. Bodin, bk. 4; Pufendorff, *The Law of Nature*,

philosophy. The self-interest of man never disappears once it is engendered. Rather it gains force through the life in society. So there is a tendency in every government for the forces of private interest to take precedence of the general will and for the governing body to usurp the sovereignty itself. Thus the prince eventually comes to oppress the people and breaks up the social treaty; and the State perishes. This is the general course of events. It takes place, however, in two distinct ways. Sometimes the government tends to narrow itself down, passing from the larger to the smaller number until it ends in royalty, as in the cases of Venice and Rome. The will of the prince inevitably becomes the will of one man and a purely personal will whose rectitude is nil. The contrary order of events is simply impossible, because it predicates an advance toward weakness and nullity on the part of the government. On the other hand the State itself may dissolve. One such case is when the prince usurps the sovereign power and the State really shrinks to the body of men who constitute the government, leaving those outside it in the position of slaves subject to a master. The social pact is then dissolved, and those who were formerly citizens, 're-entering by right into their natural liberty, are forced, but not obliged to obey'. Another case is when certain members of the government separately usurp the executive powers which are only to be exercised by them all as one body. This is a profound violation of the constitution, and it means not only a division of the government but of the State itself. Such a condition may in general be called anarchy, but it has different forms according to the nature of the polity in which it occurs. A careful distinction ought to be made in the use of the term 'tyranny' which is the anarchism of royalty. 'In the ordinary sense, a tyrant is a king who governs with violence and without regard to justice and the laws. In the precise meaning, however, a tyrant is a private individual who arrogates to himself the royal authority without having any right thereto'. Here tyrant is used of one who is a usurper of such authority, who works his way into the place contrary to the laws but in order to govern according to the laws. A despot is a usurper of the sovereign authority who places himself at all times above the laws.

As a result of usurpation comes *The Death of the Body Politic*. No state can hope to last for ever, if such as Sparta and Rome were unable to survive. Death is as natural to the moral person of the State as to the natural man. The only thing to do is to give

bk. 8, ch. 12 (end); Hobbes, *Triplos*, pt. 2, ch. 8; *Leviathan*, ch. 29; Locke, op. cit., bk. 2, ch. 19 (end).

the body-politic the best constitution possible for the exigencies of its existence. To this end the chief attention ought always to be on the sovereign authority which is the principle of life in the body-politic. 'It is not by the laws that the State subsists; it is by the legislative power. Yesterday's law does not oblige today; but tacit consent to it is presumed from silence, and the sovereign is understood to confirm unceasingly the laws which it does not abrogate, if it is able to do so.' The very respect which men have for ancient laws comes from this fact that they express ancient wills that have proved worthy of endorsement for many, many years. Thus the laws need not weaken with time but can actually gain a new force, provided the State be well constituted. What are we to do, then, to forestall the death of the body-politic? The query re-echoes that of the postscript of the pessimistic *Discourse on Inequality*. Now the author does not merely end his story, but proceeds to show that resources men have in themselves to meet this question: *How the Sovereign Authority maintains itself*.

'The sovereign, having no other force than legislative power acts only through the laws, and laws being only the authentic acts of the general will, the sovereign could not possibly act save when the people is assembled. The people assembled, they cry out, what a chimera!¹ It is so nowadays. But it was not at all so two thousand years ago. And have men changed nature since? The limits of the possible, in moral matters, are less narrow than we think: it is our weaknesses, our vices, our prejudices that make them so restricted. . . . By what has been done, let us consider what still can be done.' For such things happened once, not in the little Greek cities but in a vast city in a very grand State, namely, Rome. Despite the tremendous number of the citizens it was possible for them to meet frequently at intervals of but a few weeks and to exercise the rights of sovereignty, and they did even more, they participated in some of the actions of government itself.' Such assemblies were regular parts of the constitution of the earliest states in history, even the monarchies of a size comparable to those of modern Europe. Why, then, should they seem impossible to-day? Indeed, they are the fundamental means of 'maintaining the sovereign authority' of any State whatsoever. They represent the only way the people as sovereign can assert their superiority over the government in proportion as the government asserts its superiority over them in their status as mere members or subjects. It was for this solution the principle was formulated in the first chapter on government, that the sovereign shall always show a power

¹ Cf. Bodin, bk. 6, ch. 4, p. 940.

sufficient to prevent the power of the government from being tyrannical over the citizen. Consequently, Rousseau devoted two more whole chapters to this subject. 'It is not enough that the people should have assembled together on one single occasion and fixed the constitution of the State and given their sanction to a body of laws; it is not sufficient that they should have established a perpetual government, or have provided, once for all, for the election of their magistrates—besides even the extraordinary assemblies that unforeseen circumstances may render necessary, it is requisite that there shall be fixed and periodic assemblies which nothing can ever abolish or prorogue, in such wise that on the appointed day the people shall be lawfully convoked by the Law, without need whatsoever for another and formal convocation.' Any other gatherings of the multitude, not prescribed by Law, or summoned by the governing magistrates themselves, are unlawful, and anything transacted in them null and void. How frequent such assemblies ought to be depends on the conditions: 'It can be said in general, however, that the more force the government has, the more frequently the sovereign ought to show itself.'¹ That might be possible in ancient Rome or modern Geneva, but what is to be done when a State contains many cities? Is the 'sovereign authority' to be parcelled out among the several cities, or is one of them to be made the sovereign and the others subject to it? But the sovereignty must be simple and undivided; and further no city can be lawfully subjected to another, no more than one man to another, 'because the essence of the body-politic is in the agreement of obedience and liberty, and the words "subject" and "sovereign" are identical correlations the idea of which is united under the single term of "citizen"'. Moreover, it is always a bad thing to combine many cities into one grand city, for the disadvantages of a large State cannot be avoided. 'But how give small States force enough to resist large ones? As formerly the Greek cities resisted the great king, and more recently Holland and Switzerland resisted the house of Austria'—by confederation, on which something may be said subsequently.² But in case a State cannot be reduced to proper bounds, the remedy is 'not to tolerate any capital city but to make the government hold office alternately in every one of the cities, and to gather into assembly there all the estates of the realm'. Whatever the device, this should be the maxim:

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, bk. 4, ch. 14, 1298b.

² Diderot raised the question about the precariousness of small states—see the later *Réfutation suivie de l'ouvrage d'Helvétius intitulé l'Homme* (written 1773-4), vol. ii, p. 390.

'People the territory equally, extend the same rights throughout the length and breadth of the land, bring abundance and life everywhere—thus it is a State will come to be as strong and well-governed as possible.' But further consideration must be given this institution of assembly. 'At the instant the people is lawfully assembled in sovereign body, all jurisdiction of the government ceases, the executive power is suspended, and the person of the meanest citizen is as sacred and inviolable as that of the chief magistrate, because where the represented himself is found there is no longer any representative.' This principle was sometimes forgotten in Rome by the consuls, the tribunes, and the Senate, with tumult arising as a consequence. Of course, such intervals of suspension of the executive power, during which the prince is due to acknowledge a superior, have always been much feared by rulers who employ every sort of trick and even use force to turn the citizens from their exercise of their right and duty on such occasions.¹ It is, however, only their own surrender to the love of ease or greed that ever induces them to consent to the abolishing of these lawful assemblies and then their sovereign authority vanishes and the State falls.

Sometimes another institution establishes itself instead of actual assembly of the sovereign: *Deputies or Representatives*. Here the citizens who prefer to take their ease, or do something else of their own, have representatives substituting for them in the assertion of their authority. Just as they pay others to serve for them in the defense of the country, so they send others into council for themselves and their society. A dark judgment was uttered, in words savoring of the attitude of Plato or Aristotle toward commerce: 'The word *finance* is a slave's term; it is unheard of in the City.' Where liberty is valued, the policy is precisely the contrary to this practice so common among the moderns. The citizen expects to do all he can with his own hands and not to hire another with money. He pays his dues in personal labor rather than in taxes, for that makes him realise that the State is his affair. And the more public affairs count for something in the minds of the citizens over and above their private interests and profit, the better is the State constituted. Where the citizens are pleased to do things in common, they have little desire to seek out peculiar and private satisfactions. 'In a city well conducted everyone flies to the assemblies; under a bad government no one cares to take a step to put in an appearance, because no one takes any interest in what is done there, and foresees that the general will is not going to be dominant; and so domestic

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, bk. 4, ch. 13, 1297a.

cares absorb their whole attention. Good laws make for better ones, bad ones only lead on to still worse ones. As soon as anyone says of the affairs of State: *What does that matter to me?*, one can be sure that the State is lost.' It is only when the love of country has grown lukewarm and private interests are most active, and when the State has become immense through conquest and abuses of government that men conceive this notion of sending their deputies to the assemblies of the nation. Ironically enough, they, who purport to represent the whole people, are called The Third Estate, which betrays that the public interest is really consigned to third place in the order of things. But the very idea of representatives is untenable. There cannot be representatives of the people simply because the sovereign cannot be alienated to any body without ceasing to exist and to have authority over its own members. The sovereignty is essentially in the general will, and this will simply cannot be identified with any particular will. It is either general or non-existent. 'So deputies of the people are not and cannot be their representatives; they are simply men charged with a commission. They cannot determine anything finally. Every law that the people have not ratified in person is null, and not a law at all. The English people think they are free: they are very much mistaken. They are so only during the election of the members of Parliament. Once the election is made they are slaves, they are simply nothing. In the short moment of their liberty the use they make of it only proves they deserve to lose it.' There Rousseau rejected the opinion of the Encyclopedists and Voltaire and Montesquieu who admired the English constitution as it had been described by Locke. And he further condemned the idea of representatives as being a feudal survival, a relic of a mode of government at a time when the human race was degraded. His own predilections, like those of the early moderns who had a disgust of the medieval, were for the governments of the ancient world. 'Then even in the monarchies the people never had representatives: they did not know the word. It is very singular that at Rome, where the tribunes were so sacred, no one even imagined that they could usurp the functions of the people, and further, that in the midst of so great a mass of people they never attempted to pass a single plebiscite on their own initiative.' Where 'right and liberty' are all important, nothing is too much trouble. The wise Roman people provided that the lictors should do for them what the tribunes would not be permitted to do, and the lictors would never have dreamed, from their position otherwise, of pretending to represent the people. Sometimes the tribunes did represent the people, but that can be understood

when we realise in what precise mode the government represents the sovereign. It is never possible in respect to the legislative power. 'But it can and ought to be done in regard to the executive power, which is nothing but the force applied to the law.' Of course, this proposition means that 'very few nations really have laws', since the people do not ratify them as a body. But since it is the force of the people that is employed by the executive power to give effect to their laws, it can and ought to be arranged *that the people shall be represented in the government* which wields this executive power. This was simple with the Greeks. The people were always assembled and ready to act for themselves. They had a good climate and plenty of slaves to work for them. 'What, liberty is only maintained on the basis of servitude! Perhaps. The two extremes do meet. All that is not in Nature has its disadvantages, and civil society more than other things. . . . As for you moderns, you don't have any slaves, but you yourselves *are* slaves. You pay for their liberty with your own. You do well to boast of that superiority; I find more that is contemptible in it, than humanity.' This is not recommending slavery. It is irony. 'I am only telling the reasons why modern peoples, who believe themselves to be free, have representatives, and why ancient peoples had none. However it be, the instant a people give themselves representatives they are no longer free; they simply are no more, as a people.' And all in all it must be confessed that it is henceforth impossible for the sovereign people to exercise their rights unless the city is very small indeed. The same question then recurs, how, if the State is so very small, it can keep from being conquered by others. There is a solution for this in view, whereby such a polity might have an external power in the world as well as a right order within, *viz.*, the institution of federation. But that must await the completion of this argument concerning the State proper.

This Third Book has so far defined the nature and action of government, and its subordinate role as intermediary between the sovereign and the citizens. Indications have been given of the way in which this executive power might be kept under the control of the people whom it controls as individuals. The institution of lawful and periodic assembly might maintain the authority of the whole body; but this presupposes a State small enough to permit of such assembly. The question of self-defense immediately arising, its solution might be the institution of a federal body, strong against outward aggression but leaving the States essentially autonomous. These two institutions of periodic general assembly and federation press for further attention. But

meantime the very instituting of government itself has not yet been treated. The pages in the history of the people assembling for common action must therefore be turned back to the point at which the legislative power is 'well-established' and it is a question of establishing the executive power in the State. Now the principle fundamental to the life of a people who have united by a social contract is that of equality. This implies 'that what all ought to do, all ought to prescribe', and that 'none has any right to require that another shall undertake what he will not do himself'. But it is precisely such a right to require certain actions of other persons that is conferred on a government. From this it is clear that the right does not follow from the contract itself, *That the institution of the government is not in the least a contract*. The chapter maintaining this negative proposition is an absolute break with Pufendorff and Locke as well as with Grotius or Hobbes. The origin of government is not a contract of the people to obey and their chiefs to command. It is absurd on the face of it. 'The sovereign authority can no more modify itself than alienate itself: to limit is to destroy it. It is absurd and contradictory for the sovereign to give itself a superior. To oblige oneself to obey a master is simply to set oneself free to a full liberty.' Moreover, that supposed transaction is between the sovereign and such and such particular individuals, whence it follows that the act is not one of law or sovereignty and therefore is not binding. As a matter of fact both parties remain in 'state of nature' as regards their convention, and they lack a guarantor of their engagements under it, so that they are free to do as they like at any time. Such a thing is not a contract in any sense of the word. 'There is but one contract in the State, that of the association, and it excludes every other one.'

What, then, is to be said positively concerning *The Institution of the Government*? It is a complex affair. Two distinct actions are involved, one, establishing the law on this point, the other its execution. The sovereign must first of all determine what form of Government there is to be, and this can be done by law. Then the people must name the chiefs who are to hold such lawful office, and this nomination, since it is the designating of certain particular persons, cannot be a true law but must itself be in a sense an act of government by the whole people. Here is a logical puzzle. How can there be an act of government before the distinct governing body as such exists? How can the people, who have only appeared heretofore in the role of either sovereign or subject, now act, if only for an instant, as the prince? It is an astonishing, but entirely conceivable practice. What

may be said to happen in this case is that the people as sovereign are suddenly converted into a democracy (as Hobbes had admitted)¹ where all the citizens act as magistrates in order to put into effect the law they have just made as sovereign regarding their own subsequent government. Such a mode of procedure is not unheard of in public affairs. The House of Commons in England often constitutes itself a 'committee of the whole', in order to get results, and in the capacity of committee it reports back to itself as a House which then accepts the report as its own action. All lawful government is thus democratic in principle. The body of magistrates, whatever be the form of the government, derive their *right* to office from the will of the whole people. Thus it is seen that the institution of government is truly 'not by contract but by law, and that the depositaries of the executive power are not in the least the masters of the people but their officers, that the people can set them up and remove them when they please, that it is not a question for these executives of contracting with the people but obeying them, and that when they charge themselves with the functions imposed on them by the State they are only fulfilling their duty as citizens without having any right on their part to discuss the conditions'. And even if a people institute an hereditary government, they must not be considered to have assumed an engagement for ever to adhere to that rule. They have merely given their public administration this 'provisional form' which holds 'until they please to order matters otherwise'. Of course, such changes are likely to be dangerous, and a government ought never to be touched in so vital a way until it has become absolutely incompatible with the public good. 'But that circumspection is a maxim of policy and not a rule of right, and the State is no more bound to leave the civil authority vested in its chiefs than the military authority in its generals.' It is true, also, that the greatest care should be taken to observe the formalities requisite to having a 'regular and lawful action' of the people in assembly, as distinct from a seditious and tumultuous act of a mob. Here it is easy for the adroit prince to plead the necessity of public order and presume authority for his actions from a populace intimidated by the fear of his force.² Sooner or later all governments in the world, when they are once thoroughly invested with power, usurp the sovereign authority. And this raised the problem again as to *The means of preventing the usurpations of the government.*

¹ *Philosophical Rudiments*, ch. 7, par. 5, p. 96, 'Those who meet together with intention to erect a city were almost, in the very act of meeting, a democracy'.

² Aristotle described (*Pol.*, bk. 4, ch. 13, 1297a) how 'the rich craftily endeavour to undermine the rights of the people' in regard to their attendance at 'their public assemblies' and other functions.

'The periodic assemblies, of which I have spoken above, are best for preventing, or deferring, that evil, especially when they do not have need of any formal convocation, for then the prince could not interfere with them without declaring himself openly a violator of the laws and enemy of the State.' And to guard against any intimidation in the assemblies themselves, two separate questions ought always to be put and never suppressed, so that a definite answer is required: 'First, Whether it pleases the sovereign to keep up the present form of government. Second, Whether it pleases the people to leave the administration to those who are actually charged with it at the moment.' This presupposes that there is no law so fundamental that the people could not revoke it if they so willed, 'not even the social pact itself'. Those who have made it have always the right to dissolve it. Even Grotius had allowed that an individual simply on his own account may renounce his allegiance, and it would be absurd if the people did not have the same right to release themselves from their own bonds.

But this leads to a new thought. If a people were ever to do such a thing, they would only be proving themselves to be still a people in the very act of dissolution. Their agreeing to do so would be an act of the general will, and as real an action as the original agreement whereby they formed themselves into a social body. So long as there is this kind of action by mutual agreement, so long as the people come together in a convention or assembly to take action in common, there is enduring vitality in the body-politic. Governments and forms may change and disappear, but it is still true *That the general will is indestructible*. This hopeful thought sent Rousseau into a Fourth Book in this *Social Contract*, where he wanted to inquire further into the possibilities of the people acting thus through public assemblies, and into any other means 'of strengthening the constitution of the State' so that it may live long, and its members continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty with law and general prosperity.¹

There are definite stages of vitality in the general will of a

¹ The matter in Book 4, except for the allusion to Roman Institutions, is not mentioned in the *Émile*, which suggests that these thoughts were achieved subsequently to that abstract. It may also have been in reference to this material that Rousseau told Rey his remaining 'draft', after sending off the final copy, was 'neither so accurate nor so complete' as that version. Letter of Oct. 14, 1761, No. 1142. All this seems evidence for considering the abstract in *Émile* as taken from the first version of the *Social Contract* and from other materials once comprised in the larger work on politics. The alternative hypothesis, that *Émile* gives a summary of the final version, has been tried out in my article *The Meaning of Obligation*, published in a volume by various authors, *Contemporary Idealism in America*, pp. 278-9, 285.

social body. 'As long as a number of men who are united with each other consider themselves to be one body, they have but one will, which refers to their common preservation and the general well-being.' When this is perfectly the case, the springs of action in the State are vigorous and simple. The common good is plain to be seen and wants only to be pointed out to be made the object of general action. No subtleties of politics are necessary where men live in 'peace, union, equality'. They are then not easily fooled about real values. Such a condition might be said to exist in some of the Swiss peasant democracies. The State then needs few laws, though if any are necessary, the fact is universally appreciated, and it is only a matter of giving public declaration so that 'everyone will be sure that the others will do as he means do so'. It is hard for writers with their experience of the game of politics in Paris or London to realise how such a civil society ever could exist. It is, of course, extremely rare. One sees more instances of the less perfect condition, where the social tie has relaxed somewhat and private interest is more active and the general will is not simply to be found in the will that passes as the will of all—incidentally Rousseau was again following the Greek mode of exposition, passing from the perfect to the worst stage, as in his own early *Discourse*. This first remove from a simple and perfect Republic shows men in frequent oppositions to each other and engaged in more discussion and political business. Then comes a third step down, when the State is very near its ruin, when the bond is broken in the hearts of men but some appearance of their unity still remains, when private advantage is the brazen and declared aim of men who yet go through the forms of law to cover over what are in fact 'iniquitous decrees'.¹ Surely now the general will is a non-entity, or else absolutely corrupted and without significance. But no, it is not gone, even here. 'It is always constant and pure, but it is subordinated to other wills that get ahead of it. Everyone, while he detaches his own interest from the common interest, sees well enough that he cannot separate it altogether therefrom, but he thinks his share of the public ill is of no account compared with the exclusive good which he is aiming to appropriate. Apart from that particular good, he still wants the general will to hold, just as strongly as any other person. Even if he is so venal as to sell his vote, he does not extinguish the general will in himself, he merely eludes it. His fault is to change the state of the question, and to reply to another than that which is asked,

¹ The account here retraces that of Aristotle, *Pol.*, bk. 4, ch. 4, 1291b, 1292a; bk. 6, ch. 4, 1318b, 1319a-b, where the falling away from 'the most pure democracies' takes place, through several stages.

so that, instead of saying by his vote: *It is advantageous for the State*, he says in fact, *It is advantageous for such a man or such a party that such and such a measure shall pass*. Hence the law of public procedure in assemblies is not so much to maintain the general will as to see to it that this will is always interrogated, and that it always gives response.' Other rules of procedure might be deduced, regarding the right of voting, opining, proposing, taking a division, but the detailed consideration of these would require a separate treatise.

It is well to consider, however, the principle of *Voting*, for the way in which affairs are conducted in the assembly of a city is a good indication of the actual state of morals and the health of the body-politic. The more agreement there is, the more dominant is the general will. Long debates, dissensions, up-
roars, all betoken a predominance of private interest. It is harder to appreciate that fact in a city like Rome where the State remained strong though greatly troubled by quarrels. This was due to a defect in the Roman constitution, which recognised the separate interests of the patricians and the plebeians and virtually established two States in the same territory. Taken separately, however, both orders were strong precisely because of the high degree of unanimity achieved in them. Thus the plebiscites, whenever they were not interfered with by the Senate, came off peaceably and with large majorities. Another kind of unanimity obtained, at the other extreme, under the Emperors when every one was agreed because of fear or abject adulation. From such instances one obtains a clue to the maxims for voting, the results of which are to pass as the general will. Only one law must be considered to require 'unanimous consent' for its ratification, and that is 'the social pact itself. For the civil association is, of all the acts in the world, the most voluntary. Every man being born free and master of his own life, no one can, under any pretext whatsoever, be subjected to anything without his own consent'. So if, after the social pact is made, there arise any who oppose it, their opposition in no way invalidates the social contract, but simply prevents their being included in the arrangement—such ones are strangers dwelling amongst the citizens. When the State is already instituted, however, 'consent is implied in residence, for to inhabit the territory is to submit to the sovereignty'. A later footnote, added in 1762, modifies this by limiting the rule to a genuinely 'free State, because otherwise the family, goods, lack of asylum elsewhere, necessities, even violence, can keep an inhabitant in the country despite himself, and then his sojourn neither presupposes his consent to the contract nor his violation of the

contract'. Outside of this fundamental commitment 'the voice of the greatest number always obliges all the others—that is a consequence of the social contract itself. But some one will ask how a man can be free and yet forced to conform to the wills that are not his own? How are the opposers free, and subjected to laws to which they have not consented? I answer that the question is wrongly put. The citizen consents to all the laws, even to those that are passed in despite of himself, and even to those that punish him when he dares to violate any one of them. The constant will of all the members of the State is the general will, and it is by virtue thereof that they are citizens and free men.' Another footnote of 1762 commends the superscription over the doors to the prisons at Genoa, *Liberty*, because putting all malefactors in the galleries means liberty to all good citizens. 'When a law is proposed in the assembly of the people, what is asked is not precisely whether they approve or reject the proposition personally, but whether it is conformable or not to the general will which is their own will. Each one in voting gives his opinion on that score, and from the count is taken the declaration of the general will. So when the opinion contrary to mine comes out ahead, that proves nothing except that I have been mistaken, and what I took to be the general will was not so. If my personal opinion had won out, I should have done something other than what I really intended, and in that case I should not have been free. Of course, all this presupposes that all the characters of the general will are still in the plurality. Well, when they cease to be there, whatever side is taken, there is no longer any liberty.' There is more to be said later about preventing the domination of private interests in the deliberations of an assembly. Meantime certain general rules may be deduced, that when the business is very serious and important, decisions by a very great majority ought to be required, and where quick dispatch is needful, a bare majority should suffice. Roughly speaking, the first is the requirement for law-making, the second for public affairs.

Concerning *Elections* something must be said. This is the designating of the officers of the government by all the people. The tradition of republics had been to choose their ministers by lot. Montesquieu seemed to think this way was taken because it hurt no one's feelings, since it left every one a reasonable hope some day to serve his country. The true reasons were otherwise. An election is an act of government and in a democracy must be carried out with the least possible multiplication of actions. Moreover, the magistracy is no boon but a burdensome charge, which cannot be justly imposed on any one citizen more than

any other. The law imposes office as a duty, according as the lots fall. In the case of an aristocracy, 'the prince chooses the prince', the body of the few who govern elect others to their own membership. According to this, Venice itself, however, could not be called an aristocracy, for the nobility were so numerous as to be virtually identical with the people, thus ranking with the citizens who formed the general council in the republic of Geneva, which was in various respects not unlike aristocratic Venice. However, the practice of electing by lot is not the only method employed in democracies. Choice is employed as well as chance, the former where special talents are required; the latter where it is sufficient to have 'good sense, justice, integrity', as in the judiciary, for when a State is well-constituted, those qualities are common to all the citizens.¹ As regards monarchical government, lot has no place and everything is the will of the monarch. Thus when St. Pierre proposed a government by plurality of councils for France and the election of its members by lot he was inadvertently changing the fundamental constitution of that State. But the thought of dealing with so vast a nation raised the question again of what any one could possibly propose to meet this situation. The sovereign remedy for usurpation is to strengthen the tradition of assembling the people to make their voice and will felt in the conduct of the public affairs. By what means can that be done in so large a society? It will never do in this treatise to be always citing Venice or Geneva, small States, mere cities. It would be a good thing, therefore, to investigate 'how public and private affairs were transacted in a council of two hundred thousand men' in ancient Rome. Four chapters follow, therefore, on Roman Institutions—*The Roman Comitia*, *The Tribunate*, *The Dictatorship*, and *The Censorship*.

The citizen of Geneva had long idealised Rome. Montesquieu had treated the subject more than once, in his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and of their Decadence* and in a chapter of Book II of his *Spirit of the Laws*, and though he was always calling attention to the role of climate, locality, and other factors of environment, he insisted as strongly upon the moral causes in the people themselves as the true determinant of their greatness or decline. This was but following the *Politics* of Aristotle, who considered manners and morals so important that he recommended the institution of censorship as well as 'public assemblies' and other institutions characteristic of the Greek city-state. Thus Montesquieu had written, concerning the Roman Censorship: 'In a word, a free government, that is

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, bk. 4, ch. 15, 1299a.

to say, one always in agitation, could not possibly maintain itself if it were not capable of correction by its own laws.' He preferred, however, the institution of a public assembly to that of a censorship: 'The government of England is wiser, because there is a body in it which examines it continually, and which continually examines itself'—referring thus eulogistically to the legislative body, Parliament. And it was extolled as the chief merit of 'the fine English system' that 'the legislative has the power to examine the execution of the laws'.¹ This idea of such an 'inspection' of its agents by the whole assembled people Rousseau had long before appropriated from Fénelon as well as Montesquieu, and he had apparently made some early studies of Roman Institutions, intended for his book on *Political Institutions*, in order to illustrate what excellent means the ancients had found for controlling the governing power in their society. The abstract in *Émile* mentioned such studies. And the chapters here introduced in the *Social Contract* bear evidence, too, of his other interests in an earlier period, for they often read as if they were parts of a *History of Morals*, and they even contain some things that are irrelevant, nay more, contradictory to the theme they were meant to demonstrate in this present work on political right.

The chapter on the Roman Assemblies opens with a remark that harks back to the questions of his *Discourse on Inequality*: 'Experience teaches us every day from what causes come the revolutions of empires;² but since peoples are no longer being formed, we have scarcely anything but conjectures for our explanation of the way in which they are formed.' In the case of Rome, however, authentic traditions lead back to origins, and they are so reasonable that they should be allowed to pass as the truth.³ 'Such are the maxims I have tried to follow in seeking to find out how the freest and most powerful people on the face of the earth exercised its supreme power.'

Rome was divided for various reasons into tribes, centuries, and curies; and the people acted now under the one, and again under some other of these divisions. Such a constitution was precisely the kind to cause injustice as well as inefficiency in the State, and yet that society managed to achieve the greatest degree of power and freedom on record. How was this? It was

¹ Aristotle, on censorship, *Pol.*, bk. 5, ch. 8, 1308b. Montesquieu, *Considérations*, ch. 8, pp. 146-7; *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 11, ch. 15, pp. 268 ff.; ch. 16 ('The Legislative Power in the Roman Republic'), pp. 274 ff.

² The phrase here is reminiscent of the letter from Malesherbes; see above, p. 177.

³ Vaughan points out, from Dreyfus-Brisac, that Rousseau made use of Sigonius (*De antiquo jure civium Romanorum*) and Machiavelli (*Discorsi sopra Tito Livio*), vol. ii, p. 109 n.

due to the ancient morals of the people themselves. And these in turn came from their predilection for life in the country and in villages. And the moralist was in fact too eloquent on that theme, for he disparaged the city-dwellers of Rome proper, saying that while the tribes of the city were in easy reach for their assembly, they were also, for the same reason, more easily corrupted—a point that ought to have been scored out in the revision, since it contradicts the very object of these chapters which is to show how the incorruptible will of the people in assembly is the mainstay of the body-politic. For it was next told how no law was sanctioned nor any magistrates elected save in one or other of these assemblies. And since every citizen had a place in some assembly, all enjoyed the right of suffrage, and the Roman people were actually a sovereign. Laws and inviolable traditions regulated the summoning of their different assemblies. Their power went far beyond the enacting of laws and the electing of their government—it had a competence in the foreign affairs of the State which affected the whole subsequent history of Europe. So much for the general significance of the *comitia*. But the several kinds differed very much in function and merit and efficiency. The people had been divided into curies expressly for the purpose of restraining the Senate by the people and *vice versa*: the authority of numbers was to balance that of wealth and power in the patricians. The assembly by curies thus harbored a dangerous opposition. But the State was saved from division by a new ‘master stroke of policy and humanity’, the institution of the patron and client relation, whereby the patricians gained an interest in the multitude, and at the same time, a friendly element amongst them. The assembly by centuries was favorable to the aristocracy, because the power was lodged in a dominant first class which had the function of electing the consuls, censors, and the curial magistrates, in brief, the government. However, this dominance was tempered in two ways: many plebeians were wealthy and members of that first class, and they as well as the consuls ordinary offset the overweening influence of the patricians; and secondly, a practice was adopted of choosing by lot the century which was to make the nominations, and setting the final election by all the other centuries some days later, when ‘the citizens of the country had time to inform themselves of the candidate provisionally named’, though on the pretext of the need of celerity this was eventually abandoned.¹ The assembly by tribes appears to have been the real council of the Roman People. It was

¹ Aristotle had mentioned the importance of seeing that no legal assembly for such purposes should be held without the rural inhabitants. *Pol.*, bk. 6, ch. 4, 1319a.

convened by the tribunes of the people and in it all the plebiscites and laws were enacted. Yet as a matter of fact this popular assembly was seriously defective, because the Senators were absolutely debarred from it and therefore from any part in the law-making.¹ They had Rousseau's sympathy, since they were 'forced to obey laws on which they had not had a chance to vote'. The injustice could have been easily remedied by the inclusion of those other important members of the State. Hence, though each form of assembly had its peculiar defects, that by centuries possessed the greatest merit, because all were included without exception, and it was in that assembly 'the majority of the Roman people' were to be found.

The voting in such assemblies had been at first *viva voce* but a secret ballot was resorted to in later days when votes were bought. This step was foolishly lamented by Cicero. But Rousseau thought well of it because it meant protection and liberty for the honest individual. Of course, things were then on the decline. Some desperate efforts were made by rules of procedure in the assemblies to give the laws greater force against the evils; but matters grew steadily worse. Yet the amazing thing is that 'in the midst of such abuses this immense people, thanks to their ancient ways of proceeding, never gave up electing their magistrates, passing laws, judging causes, and expediting private and public business with almost as much facility as the Senate itself would have done'. Such was the vitality of the society which acted through public assemblies.

The interplay of these various bodies in the State required some mediating agency to keep the bond between the prince and the people, and the prince and the sovereign, throughout all the complicating relationships. This was the reason for the *Tribunate*. It was not exactly a constituent part of the State; it had no share in either the legislative or executive power; but it was 'the conservator of the laws and the legislative power'. It protected the people against the government and the government against the people. It had full power to prevent action on one side or the other. And it was more sacred and revered, as defender of the laws, than the prince himself, indeed, even the sovereign. The tribunes were thus figures of almost mythical character like the Legislator. They were the counterpart of Plato's 'guardian of the laws'. But the tribunate at Rome had always tended to become the government, and so the office had to be periodically suspended and a new magistrate appointed on every such occasion so that they would be for ever subordinate to the law which it was their function to preserve intact.

¹ Montesquieu pointed out this 'shocking' defect, *op. cit.*, bk. 11, ch. 16, p. 275.

The *Dictatorship* was an office easier to explain. Not everything can be foreseen by the laws, and it is not always possible to wait for the slow processes of legislation through the assembling of the people. Sometimes the situation can be met by a concentration of the Government, and merely altering the form of the administration. But at other times the laws themselves must be suspended and even, 'for a moment, the sovereign authority'. In such a case the general will is not to be doubted, for it is evident that the first intention of the people is that the State shall not perish. To suspend the sovereign authority, in that manner and for that purpose, is not to abolish it. 'The magistrate who makes it be silent cannot make it speak: he dominates it, without being able to represent it. He can do all, excepting to make the laws.' So long as this is recognised, the extraordinary action is no contradiction of the principle of right. It seemed entirely proper that during the times of early insecurity before the constitution was fixed Rome should have had dictatorships periodically—the morals of the people made precautions against them superfluous. And in later days, according to Rousseau, this ought to have been done more frequently, an open dictatorship instead of a covert violation of the laws for the sake of pretending that the laws were still supreme, and not certain individuals. Cicero did good work in ridding the State of Catiline but he violated the laws, and that was done in part because he wanted all the glory of saving Rome himself. A dictatorship would have been safer and more honest. But a definite term to it must always be established, as in the case of the tribunate; and it ought always to be very short, so that the dictator 'has only time to take care of the business for which he is chosen, not enough to be able to lay plans for other things'.

The *Censorship* deserves a little notice. Just as the public have a will which is declared in law, so they also have judgments about what is worthy of esteem or not, and this is 'a kind of law, where the censor is the minister'. He is nothing more than the exponent of that public opinion, which is, after all, the real determinant of the morals of a society. The pleasures men prefer make their morals what they are. To rectify their judgment, then, is the best way to purify their morality. Nothing can be done by force of law or authority on this matter. The censor himself cannot create opinion, not even re-establish it; all he can do is to keep public opinion in accord with principle by showing wise applications. Thus the practice of using seconds in duelling, which had become a serious menace, was prudently stopped by a wise edict which attributed the calling-in of seconds to cowardice on the part of the principals themselves.

This subject, Rousseau observed, he had discussed a-plenty in his *Letter to D'Alembert*, where he had showed the moral authority of public opinion and honor.

Indeed, these latter chapters only reproduced the spirit and thought of that early 'citizen' who had defended the polity of his own city, Geneva. They were written about the first of his themes as a moralist: men, when they come together in assembly and take counsel with each other, have the moral resources in their own society for the remedy of their ills and for living a good and righteous life together. Their judgment and will as a body has a value safeguarding them against all the dangers and evils of their social condition. Law in itself may often seem to be powerless against the scheming usurpation of governments, but law, nevertheless, has a coadjutor in the assembly of the people who are the source of all authority whatsoever in the State. Their will for their own preservation can even suspend the law for a time. That will raises up magistracies and institutions for this or that purpose, and takes them down again when the ends are served. This potency of the moral forces of the people in assembly makes that institution the most fundamental one—it is the assembly of all that makes the laws, sets up governments, inspects and examines the execution of the laws by the government, and preserves the laws and the State. When Rousseau illustrated this in his chapters on the Roman Institutions he had doubtless reached the end of his material originally designed for his book on *Political Institutions*. And this surviving fragment of that project, *The Social Contract*, might well have ended on such a note, that the moral forces of men in society are sufficient for the maintenance of the State and of the justice and liberty it is intended to vouchsafe to men.

CHAPTER XX

RELIGION AND THE STATE

BUT were men in society sufficient unto themselves? That question had been growing upon Rousseau since the days when he first sketched his political faith. 'Without religion, no civil society can be maintained', Pufendorff had written, and Montesquieu had expressed his agreement: and Rousseau was the disciple of both of them.¹ They were following an ancient doctrine, in the *Laws* of Plato, that civic morality needs for its sanction a belief in the Goodness of God and the immortality of the Soul. The Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Books of the *Spirit of the Laws* had thus been devoted to religion, and certain chapters to the question of its establishment and the force it gives to the laws of the State. Above all there was an important, final chapter on 'Tolerance'. To writers such as Montesquieu and Pufendorff, religion meant Christianity. They were still thinking in the vein of the seventeenth century, of which Father Lamy, Rousseau's own early guide, was a good exponent when he said 'the republic of Jesus Christ is more holy by far, as well as richer in goodness, than that of Plato'.² They held to the old idea of a Christian Republic and an established Christianity.

But their opinion was not the only one in the field. Montesquieu himself had remarked: 'Bayle dares to say that veritable Christians would not form a State that could subsist.'³ In Bayle's own words: 'They would have a conscience too delicate to make use of the thousand ruses of politics without which one cannot parry the blows of his enemy. . . . The more one studies his own age and those preceding, the more one must recognise that every society exposed to foreign wars would soon succumb, if it conformed to the Evangelic spirit. Do you want a nation strong enough to resist its neighbors? Then leave the maxims of Christianity as themes for the preachers; keep them for theory; and bring your practice under the laws of Nature which permit one to render blow for blow, and excites us to a life above our existing condition, to become richer and of better estate than our fathers before us.' The Christians are pilgrims of the spirit, not of this earth; their City is Heaven, so they are never good soldiers or citizens of an earthly State. That was one of Bayle's 'thoughts'—and its realism had quickened 'the independent

¹ Pufendorff, *Devoirs*, ch. 4, sect. 9, p. 89; Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 24, chs. 1, 6, 14; bk. 25, ch. 9.

² B. Lamy, quoted above, vol. i, p. 6.

³ Montesquieu, bk. 24, ch. 6, p. 408.

man' to the need of some tangible guarantees for his righteousness in dealing with other creatures of the earthly régime: Christianity was, indeed, too purely spiritual. But Bayle had other reasons for such a position. He hated the intolerance of official Christianity and its horrible maxim *Compel them to enter*. And he saw that some people in his day valued religion simply as a means of binding subjects more securely to their rulers. He was one of the truly liberal thinkers of the modern period. So he asserted the wholly disinterested character of Christianity and placed it above all influence, good or bad, upon moral conduct. Leave Christianity to things of the spirit; and let common human morality take care of the life of man in the State. Yet with his own disinterested temper and encyclopedic knowledge of ancients and moderns alike, he admitted that Christianity might be of some aid in binding men into a strong society, though that was a very different thing from enslaving them to a prince, secular or ecclesiastical.¹

These divers thoughts Rousseau had meditated in the days of his discipleship to both Montesquieu and Bayle; and the conflict between those authorities re-echoed in his own thought. In writing his first version he had begun by eliminating religion as a source of the primary bonds of the State; yet he avowed in *The Legislator* that it is of some use in 'giving to the moral bond an internal force that penetrates to the soul and could be ever independent of the goods, the evils, even life itself and every human contingency'.² And though he repudiated the notion of a general society of mankind he retained the implicit Christian idea of a universal fellowship which can still be attained by the further bond of pacts between whole nations themselves. When he next studied the specific project of St. Pierre for a lasting peace in Europe he noted, particularly, how fundamental a source of unity for Europe Christianity had been—on its work statesmen might still build their political league for universal peace. The very same year he wrote his *Letter to Voltaire*, proposing the establishment of a civil creed by members of a free State who resented being forced to believe what an official Church wanted. The lesson taught by Hobbes must have also inspired that proposal, for it meant that if religion is not taken *under* the State, its devotees make themselves a separate power in the society and cause disunion and war. Rousseau was sent further in this direction by his interest in the polity of Geneva as revealed in Calvin, where he perceived the ideal of a perfect union of religion and politics, a national religion like that described by the Greeks.

¹ Bayle, *Continuation de pensées diverses*, cxxiv, vol. iii, pp. 360-6; *Pensées diverses*, clx-clxxx, pp. 102-115.

² Vaughan, vol. 1, p. 483.

But this national ideal conflicted with the other one, of religion with a universal reference. Could Christianity become an establishment for a State and for its ends, and still remain the Christianity of the Gospel? And which, after all, was the important thing, an effective and strong particular society or the broad fellowship of humanity? Naturally, Rousseau sought to realise both sets of ideals, but this way led through much confusion. He may have had notes on the question but he had certainly not written his chapter dealing with it in that version of the *Social Contract* which he showed Rey in December 1760.¹ Nor was any hint of it in the abstract in *Émile*. His position, apparently, was then not yet clear to himself or ready for statement. On the fundamental beliefs of religion by itself he had, indeed, attained to some certainties, and he devoted himself to this personal profession of faith and the philosophical objections and doubts with regard to it. The 'natural religion' for man was sooner found than the 'civil religion' for the citizen of a State. Perhaps it was sufficient to leave matters so and not seek any establishment, even for the sake of liberty!

The events of 1761, while Rousseau was making his final copy of the *Social Contract*, may well have decided him to speak his mind as clearly as he could on religion and the State. It happened that the *Julie* was then just out. And people were showing their attitude toward his religious views. His very respected old friend, the pious Catholic, Mme de Créquy, wrote her frank comments on the story of the two lovers, and she commended one of the letters on duelling, but added a criticism: 'I find it very good, but men have need of a greater restraint than reason if they are to repress their customs. They have no real desire to fight, but they are afraid of the opinion of men which they nevertheless despise. That is ridiculous folly; yet they sacrifice all to the folly.'² She wrote with feeling because she had a son in that social world with its false honor. To her, religion was the only resource of men, the bulwark of their morals. She had often talked thus to the moralist, earnestly seeking, also, to persuade him of the finality of her own religion. He respected her profoundly. But the lesson she taught him was already in his heart, and it was actually written in the manuscript of the *Émile* which, it began to seem, he would never get published. But the

¹ In a letter to Rey (No. 1220) of December 23, 1761, which replied to something the publisher must have said about the *Social Contract* as being too small for issuance by itself, Rousseau said of the final manuscript, 'il est copié sur le brouillon que vous avez jugé devoir faire un (livre), et même le chapitre sur la religion y a été ajouté depuis'. *C.G.*, vol. vii, p. 2.

² From Mme de Créquy, Feb. 6, 1761, *C.G.*, vol. v, No. 988.

Social Contract was to come out in Holland—he might, perhaps, say these things in it and make his own position clearer.

For others very grossly misunderstood him. Pastor Vernes at Geneva was much offended at the novel. He thought Rousseau ought to have ended with the final conversion of Wolmar, which was utterly missing the lesson of tolerance intended by the author.¹ And that was the lesson he wanted to teach above all—it was the one point on which such different writers as Montesquieu, Bayle, Spinoza, Locke, Voltaire, and himself were all agreed. If it were not discerned in the domestic tale of Wolmar and Julie, it must now be put very plainly in his account of the true civil order.

Then he went through an embarrassing experience with the censor Malesherbes who was so friendly toward him. The French edition of *Julie*, which had been authorised despite the pleas of the author on behalf of equity to Rey, was in course of preparation. Malesherbes began to exercise his duties as censor. He required the publishers to eliminate many passages, and often whole pages. But he thought to do the author himself a good turn by communicating these retrenchments to him before they would be put into effect, so that he might revise the work himself and probably save a very great deal from being lost, by deft editing on his own account. Most of the deletions pertained to Parts Five and Six, which had not been set up in print. They all concerned the religious discussion, for Malesherbes was trying to avoid trouble in theological quarters. Thus Wolmar's confession was censored, how he became an atheist through living in Catholic countries: 'All that is an invective against the Catholic religion which could not be tolerated in France.' The same reasons were urged against the footnote where Rousseau himself as editor observed 'that no true believer could possibly be either intolerant or a persecutor, etc.' A later note likewise was cut out, which ironically commended the Catholic religion because it provides people unable to raise their minds to 'sublime ideas of divinity' with 'objects of piety so as to dispense with their thinking of God'. Nothing dared be mentioned, even by a character, about the open, bare-faced atheism so prevalent in a Catholic country. And it was deemed unwise, making powerful 'enemies for the book and the author', to say that all persecutors are really acting 'in bad faith' and imply that they have no real belief at all. Then as to Wolmar's actual argument against Providence—it was so strong, and St. Preux's defense so weak, that the whole discussion had to be taken out, unless the author himself could weaken the objections, or else strengthen

¹ From Vernes, May 26, *C.G.* vi. No. 1077.

the case for religion. In Part Six the attack on celibacy was ordered excised, as being 'a too bitter censure of the discipline of the Catholic Church'. And where the independent man speaks up in indignation at the injustice of the doctrine of grace, and retorts to the potter: 'Why hast thou made me so?'—that revolt against the authority of the Scripture and St. Paul had to go out. Further, to appease the fury of the Jansenists who were very considerable in Paris, it was necessary to withdraw a note on the pietists who had been described with uncertain irony, as 'a sort of fool who have the notion of following the Gospel to the letter'. Another note had applied the idea that He who can do all cannot do evil, to the political realm where it was pointed out by contrast what a do-nothing or misery-causing existence absolute monarchs had. Malesherbes confessed to the same opinion personally, but he added, 'the application is terrible'. And then came the worst blow of all. Julie's profession of faith was cut out, the belief in a clement God and Father and the denial of eternal punishment. 'In that article, and in many that follow, the author, in the words of Julie and those of St. Preux, introduces the dogma of tolerance, not of civil tolerance, but of theological tolerance, the tolerance one attributes to God regarding those who live in good faith under another law than that of the veritable religion. But that dogma is reproved amongst us, and Julie as well as St. Preux have got readers accustomed to believing that they are always right. What I say about this passage applies even more so to the profession of faith of the dying Julie.' And phrase after phrase pertaining to this 'dogma' of tolerance were all condemned. If Julie were to be 'a model of enlightened piety, one ought not to put in her mouth sentiments different from the doctrine of the Church'. Perhaps, it was suggested, the author could soften some of the expressions, and thus retain the ending to his story, and likewise amend his unorthodox fancies about souls wandering abroad without bodies, since even the Calvinists would object to such a doubt as to the resurrection of the body.

Rousseau answered this communication with no lack of spirit. He accepted some of the changes, but not the most important ones, because they affected the point of the whole book which without them would seem nothing but a 'scandalous romance'. It was his own profession of faith he was being asked to deny, and he would not do so. The religious matters being left were simply what 'the most superstitious Catholic could avow'. The objectionable ideas had all been put out under his own name in the *Discourse on Inequality* and the *Letter to D'Alembert* whereas here they were in a story where the characters

disagreed with each other and made it less obviously the teaching of a doctrine. Suppress all 'the editor's notes', if need be, since they are really tell-tale, but leave the text entire—such was the counter-proposal. But Malesherbes remonstrated at this, and pointed out how carefully he had distinguished between what must be suppressed and what might be rewritten. Besides 'it was not reasonable of him to reply to propositions made to him, only by a curt and absolute refusal to undertake to do anything about them . . . he ought to take the trouble to reply article by article'.

This was very troubling. Rousseau now had to be very careful, lest he lose the favoring friendship of Malesherbes, and not only that, but perhaps the chance to publish his own definitive profession of faith in *Émile*. He wanted to comply as far as possible, but was all the more unwilling to do so because he suspected an element of fear might creep in, to spoil anything he composed. As he wrote to Coindet: 'In fine, I must have some time to myself, to see why I ought to mutilate my book for an edition with which I have no concern, and for which I can some day be held responsible to the government of France by some minister in an ugly mood. . . . However it is, if I want to expose myself, I want to do so with all my first vigor, and not as one already all mutilated, all trembling, and as a man who is afraid.'

So he replied, a fortnight later, article by article. And he took his stand, without fear, and with undoubted vigor. M. Malesherbes and he could not easily come to terms on this matter since they were basing their reasonings on quite different principles. He would consent to one retrenchment, because it eliminated a thing of bad taste. As to all the discussions of St. Preux and Wolmar on Providence—No! These characters had to speak in their parts, and not as the Church wanted. 'Would the Sorbonne make us intolerant despite ourselves, or prescribe to us in what manner it pleases them we should go to Hell (since all other than Catholics are heretics)? What right, what inspection, can the Catholic Church pretend to have over one who does not recognise its authority? . . . Every formula of profession of faith is contrary to the spirit of the reformation. . . .' There was to be no falsifying of the beliefs or disbeliefs of the persons of this drama, then, but at the most some modifications of language—the harsh epithets and certain notes could go, even that one to the effect that the true Christian is no persecutor. One thing certainly would never be done and that was to change the force of the atheist's objections, because they must be honestly faced if one is to have a genuine belief. And where St. Preux is heretical on grace, because he believes God is just, and where

he stands up for the liberty of man as the source of evil, all that is too essential to touch. Call it revolt against the Scripture, if you like, 'I myself call it a submission to the authority of God and reason, which have precedence over that of the Bible and serve as its foundation, and as regards St. Paul, if it is not permitted to argue at all against him, why, he ought not to argue himself, or at least he ought to argue better'.¹

What this all led to was Rousseau's abandoning the idea of having anything to do with another edition of *Julie* in France. But it must have sharpened the barb of his words in the final version of his *Social Contract*. 'What right has the Catholic Church over one who does not recognise its authority?' That was a query of some relevance to his treatise on political right. It may have inspired the opinion ventured at the end of the chapter *Whether the general will can err* where he declared that when one partial society within the State becomes so large that it is predominant over all the others, then the will that is thus dominant is not general at all, but is a private will, and therefore is without real authority. The Church played such a part in the monarchy of France, and the hint is that even for the subjects of that land it lacked a true authority.

It was during this same period of discussion with Malesherbes that Rousseau received a pitiful letter from his erstwhile disciple, Deleyre. He had been wanting very much to marry the woman with whom he was in love, but faced a public interrogation regarding his religion, unless he were willing to commit himself beforehand in writing to a disavowal of the views he had previously published, in the article on *Fanaticism* in the now-suppressed *Encyclopaedia*. He consented to sign the papers of retraction, and in humiliation wrote afterwards to 'the man nearest his own conscience' to justify himself, or at least, to win his sympathy. Rousseau there felt what a pressure the Church could apply in such matters of deeply personal significance. The control of marriage was another aspect of its dreadful domination. Then Deleyre wrote again, on quite a different topic, after he had read the newly published *Project for Lasting Peace*. He was most enthusiastic over the idea of a 'general association' and noted particularly that Rousseau had revealed the Christian religion to have been one of the historic sources of the unity of Europe. After remarking upon

¹ Letters between Malesherbes and Rousseau, *C.G.*, vol. vi, Nos. 1016, 1029, 1030, 1034, 1051, dated from Feb. 16, Feb. 19, Feb. 22 to about March 5, 1761. Letter to Coindet, Feb. 27, No. 1046.

Evidences of Rousseau's concern for the eventual publication of *Émile* and being exercised greatly by the whole affair—Letters to Mme de Luxembourg, Feb. 16, no. 1020; Mme de Créqui, Feb. 25, No. 1025; Coindet, Feb. 18, No. 1027.

the baneful role of the Church in the existing international order, because of its intolerance, he called upon his master to embark upon a work, 'of this sort, that you ought to propose at the same time a project for the reuniting of sentiments and belief between the Catholics and the Protestants and for bringing their minds and imaginations closer together, in order the better to bind and reunite the hearts of men in an eternal concord. You know the Christian religion well enough to be able to find the germs in it and the motives of universal reconciliation'.¹

These letters, and all that had transpired during those early months of 1761 must have kindled the desire to say all he believed about religion in civil affairs. The value of religion for the social bond in both the particular and the general association of mankind seemed undoubted. Equally undoubted, however, was the evil of an intolerant Church, as he had just witnessed it in its control of censorship and marriage. Official Christianity was a completely intolerant religion, dominating public opinion and such very personal relations as marriage and the legitimising of children—intolerant in preventing the free voicing of individual judgment, and consequently substituting its will, as a partial body within the State, for the will of all, a usurpation weakening the very constitution of any body-politic and likely to have dire effects in the external relations of States, to the detriment of peace and justice. Roused by all that, the moralist returned to his project in the *Letter to Voltaire*, of formulating a civic catechism whereby the men of his republic might be independent of a Church and yet have that truly religious regard for what is right and lawful which is so necessary to the life of the State.

His first sketch of a chapter was much too ardent against the evil of intolerance, and he had to work it over before it received the more deliberate and concise formulation of the last chapter of the *Social Contract*, on *Civil Religion*.²

First is a survey of the history of religion in its relation to human society. In the beginning, the kings of peoples were their gods, and each nation had its own cult which changed with every conquest. The wars of nations were not wars of religion as such, because the gods and the laws were all involved together in the same constitution. This integral relationship, found in the pagan system, Rousseau seems to think had an element of truth in it for the instruction of modern man, just as the integrity and balancing of motives in the early man of

¹ Letters from Deleyre, Nos. 1010 and 1062, dated Parma, Feb. 13 and Mar. 13 (probably reaching Rousseau a month later).

² See Vaughan, vol. i, pp. 499 ff.

nature, in the *Discourse on Inequality*, served as a cue to what ought to be established in contemporary civilisation. A second stage of religion in society was when Jesus came to set up a 'spiritual kingdom' alongside of 'the political system'. Then there was more serious trouble than the previous wars. For the pagans, knowing only national religions, could regard this new kingdom as nothing else but a rival political power and accordingly they persecuted the Christians as rebels in the State. Under persecution, nevertheless, the Christians triumphed, and then, 'Lo, that supposed kingdom of the other world was become, under a visible chief, the most violent despotism in this world'.¹ However, it never actually became the one and only government of the whole world, for the particular societies of men remained still vigorous in their life, each with its own 'prince and some civil laws' independent of that temporal power; and the peoples were faithful to their own local politics. Hence arose perennial conflicts between Church and State, with the individual man 'obliged to obey' either a 'master or priest'. Some nations even in Europe, and its neighborhood, tried to keep to or re-establish the ancient type of polity, but they all failed. 'The spirit of Christianity won out on every score. The sacred cult has always remained, or become, independent of the sovereign, and without necessary relationship with the body of the State.'² While Mahomet had sound ideas about assimilating a religion to the life of the State, and the constitution he set up lasted for a short time, nevertheless the Arabs became more polished, learned, skilled in the arts, and fond of luxuries, and they were subjugated by barbarians—whereupon the system of two powers appeared there exactly as in all other quarters. Wherever the clergy are a distinct body by themselves, they are master and law-giver in their province. Thus there are really two powers, two sovereigns, in England and in Russia, just as elsewhere. Of all 'the Christian writers' Hobbes alone saw clearly what the evil was, and its remedy, when he 'dared to propose the reuniting of the two heads of the eagle and bringing everything back to the political entity, without doing which no State or Government will ever be well constituted'. In trying, however, to assimilate the prevailing form of religion with a political system modelled along the lines of the ancient form, Hobbes was apparently unaware that 'the dominating spirit of

¹ Cf. Montesquieu on the 'visible chief' and the death of liberty, bk. 24, ch. 5, and bk. 25, pp. 408 and 415 ff.

² Rousseau uses the term Christianity in two senses, one that of the spiritual religion found in the Gospel of Jesus, the other that of a propagandist, officialised Church religion. Accordingly, I translate the term Christian-ism when it is in the second sense, the use of an 'ism' best conveying to-day the intended disparagement.

Christianism was incompatible with his system, and that the interest of the priest would always be stronger than that of the State'. Hobbes was hated in his own day, not for what really was false and horrible in his politics—his denial of liberty, but rather for seeing this basic truth that the body-politic must have but one sovereignty.¹ This Rousseau was determined to realise in his own scheme of politics. He recognised another truth, however, equally important, that the people of any State must have religion if they are to be morally obedient to the right sovereign. Consequently, he faced the problem anew, how to establish religion in his State without a dominating and intolerant clergy.

Incidentally, the above historical sketch disposed of two very opposite opinions about religion and politics in modern thought. Bayle had pretended that religion is of no use to the body-politic; and Warburton was positive that Christianity is its strongest support. 'One could prove to the former that no State was ever founded without having religion at the base of it; and to the latter that the Christian law is at bottom more harmful than useful to the strong constitution of the State.'

The solution of Rousseau was on a systematic basis. Religion and society are both terms which have two meanings. Society may be general or particular, either men considered simply as members of the human race or a definite body constituting a State. Religion, too, may be either 'the religion of man' or that 'of the citizen'. The first kind of religion 'without temples, without altars, without rites, limited to the purely internal worship of the Supreme God and devotion to the eternal laws of morality, is the pure and simple religion of the Gospel, the true theism'. And it may be denominated 'the natural right-divine'.² The other is a peculiarly national cult authorised in a country, with its own particular gods and tutelary saints and dogmas, but lacking any authority over those who dwell in other lands. Such was the type of religion among early peoples, and in contrast with the former religion it may be called 'civil or positive right-divine'. A third sort of so-called religion does exist which establishes two powers, two heads, two countries in a State and subjects the people to contradictory duties and prevents them from being either good citizens or truly religious people. 'Such is the religion of the Lamas, such is that of the Japanese, such is Roman Christianity. One could call that the religion of the

¹ Cf. Hobbes, *Philosophical Rudiments*, vol. ii, ch. 17; *Leviathan*, pt. 3 'Of a Christian Commonwealth', ch. 43. Hobbes proposes one article of faith.

² Montesquieu, on these distinctions of natural right-divine, &c., bk. 26, ch. 6, pp. 424-5.

priest. There results from it a sort of mixed and anti-social right which deserves no name at all.' And this is ruled out of all consideration, as a religion that serves neither God nor man well. As regards the two other types of religion, both have merits and demerits according to their nature. A national religion is of value in that it joins the cult of the divine to the love of the laws and makes the country an object of adoration to the citizen so that he believes himself to be serving God when he performs his duties in regard to the State. Such a system is a kind of theocracy, though there is no other pontif than the prince, nor any other priests than the magistrates. On the other hand it is true that such partial religions can only be founded on some error or falsity and that they must inculcate a credulous and superstitious attitude and eventually submerge the cult of Divinity in vain ceremonial. It is exclusive, too, and makes a people 'sanguinary and intolerant', so that they think themselves doing a good and holy act when they kill and massacre. In that aspect such religion is not contributing to the maintenance of the nation, because the people acting thus are really engaged in a warfare with all others and endangering their national existence. It is never the type to choose for a republic. 'There remains, then, only the religion of man or Christianity: not that of to-day, but that of the Gospel, which is entirely different from it. By virtue of that religion which is holy, sublime, and true, men, sons of the same God, acknowledge each other as brothers, and the society that unites them does not dissolve even with death itself.' Yet this, too, is somewhat inapplicable. Having no particular connection with the body-politic, this religion 'leaves to the laws only the force they have of themselves, without adding any other force thereto, and because of that, one of the great bonds of a particular society remains ineffectual. And more still, so far from attaching the hearts of the citizens to the State, it detaches them from it, as from all other earthly things. I know nothing more contrary to the social spirit.'

Here the argument took on irony. Whenever Rousseau spoke of the 'spirit' of anything he seemed to mean it in a bad sense, as in the phrase 'the spirit of system' of which he accused all the philosophers, thinking of it as a dogmatic, forcing kind of attitude which rides roughshod over facts of experience and natural sentiment. The 'social spirit' here means the interest in an exclusive society, separated off from the rest of human society, to be made strong and perfect for its own sake, regardless of the rest of mankind. This spirit contrasts with the ideal of humanity which the Gospel itself proclaims. As Bayle had intimated, 'a people of true Christians' would never form a society

in that narrow, jealous sense. The truth is 'that a society of true Christians would no longer be a society of men'. Like Democracy, it is too divine. Then Rousseau went over the discussions that had occupied his thought since reading Bayle. First came the view of the independent man in his early chapter: men cannot afford to be good unless they are all equally good, and so a single renegade Christian in a society of Christians immediately has all the others at such a disadvantage that the whole scheme of life must break down unless men make some provision for guaranteeing the religious and moral way of living by means of political institutions. Then the notion of a 'Christian republic' came up—but no, that cannot be, for Christianity teaches the acceptance of 'servitude and dependence', as of no account in comparison with the release in the other world; but a republic is dedicated to freedom and requires citizens who will fight for it and concern themselves over it. Pure spiritual Christianity will never do for this State, any more than an exclusive national religion. What then is to be done? Perhaps nothing is perfectly satisfactory. But leave the question of advantage or disadvantage, and turn to that of right. According to the doctrine of social contract the sovereign has no rights beyond the limits of public utility. Hence there can be no accountability of the citizen to the State for his opinions 'save in so far as these opinions have importance for the community'. But it is absolutely important—this is the necessity forcing Rousseau to some conclusion on this matter—that the citizens shall have some religion which will make them truly love their duties. Some dogmas will be necessary that have a definite influence on morality and duty, although men must be allowed any opinions of their own over and above these essentials of moral sentiment and conduct. 'There is, then, a profession of faith purely civil of which it is proper that the sovereign shall fix the articles, not exactly as dogmas of religion, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good citizen or faithful subject. Without being able to oblige any one to believe them, the sovereign can banish from the State any one who does not believe them: it can banish him not as impious but as unsociable, as one incapable of sincere love of the laws and justice and of being willing, in case of necessity, of giving his life for his duty. But if any one, after having publicly acknowledged these same dogmas, deports himself as one not really believing them, let him be punished with death, for he will have committed the greatest of all crimes; he has lied before the laws.' Here was a hard sentence. He had written angrily in the *Julie*, saying that any one who professes to be a Christian and yet persecutes

others, really belies his faith by such action—and it was precisely that comment which Malesherbes had insisted on striking out of the forthcoming French edition. He had also written that were he a magistrate in a State where atheism was punished by death he would ‘burn the first informer’ who forced him to put such a law into execution—and that indignant expression, too, he was told to remove from his work. He could not speak his mind in France. But he was now putting the last words to his *Social Contract* which was surely to be published by Rey in Holland beyond the jurisdiction of a government that had intolerance as a principle of its constitution. He let himself go, therefore, in his *first* writing of this chapter, pencilled on the back of some of the pages of his earlier version of the *Social Contract*. ‘Intolerance’, he wrote, is nothing short of ‘war against humanity’. ‘The society of intolerants is like that of the demons; they are in agreement with each other only in order to torment each other. . . . “It is essential to think as I do to be saved”—there you have the frightful dogma that makes all the earth desolate. You will never have done a thing for the peace of the world if you do not take that infernal dogma out of the city. Whoever does not find it execrable can be neither Christian, nor citizen, nor man, but is simply a monster one ought to immolate for the peace of the human race.’¹ These were the expressions of the first fury of his indignation, and they were subsequently condensed, and perhaps too ambiguously, into the sentence that whoever publicly acknowledges the civic faith and then acts so as to belie it deserves the worst penalty the State can inflict. The preacher of tolerance could not speak too strongly against the most evil thing he had known in the life of mankind. And it was no contradiction for him to say, not long afterwards, in a private letter to one who appealed to him on behalf of the persecuted Protestants in France: ‘Everyone has his vocation on earth, mine is to say hard but useful truths. I have tried to fulfil that vocation without suffering from the evil the wicked wish me for it and which they will do me when they can. I have preached humanity, kindness, tolerance, so far as it has depended on me, and it is not my fault if they have not listened to me.’²

¹ Vaughan, vol. i, pp. 506–7. For information on the manuscript of the first version of this chapter see p. 499, n. 3; and above, vol. i, p. 184, n. 1.

² To M. Ribotte, Nov. 24, 1761, *C.G.*, vol. vi, No. 1155. Ribotte had addressed a letter to him as citizen of Geneva, appealing that he use his good offices to intercede with the French ministry on behalf of the persecuted Protestants at Montauban, and Rousseau answered that he himself was not *persona grata* with the government, and further explained, as above, that it was his work to expound the truth, not to engage in political action. Besides he wanted more evidence that the religious population were being proceeded against officially and that they were not themselves guilty of civil disobedience, holding ‘unlawful assemblies’, &c. He continued

This doctrine of civil religion was intended to do away with all persecutors. It was not meant to sanction a dogmatic theology and inquisition. The dogmas set down as necessary to a truly civil relationship among men were, indeed, far too few in number, and simple in expression, to constitute a theology. These are the articles: 'The existence of Divinity, powerful, intelligent, beneficent, foreseeing, and providential; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of the wicked; the sanctity of the social contract and the laws—there you have the positive dogmas.' And to them was added one negative dogma, if you please (Malesherbes had sublimely called it 'the dogma of tolerance'), that there shall not be any intolerance within the State.¹ And that meant religious as well as civil intolerance, for the pretended distinction between them was non-existent. A spirit of intolerance in religion, once admitted, permeates the whole order of human relationships. 'It is impossible to live at peace with people one believes to be damned.' A civil effect always results. Marriage is an instance, on which Montesquieu had remarked.² The clergy arrogate to themselves the sole right to marry, and thus they have it in their power to determine legitimacy and the inheritance of property and to exercise a control over those who do not follow the established religion, which bore very heavily on the Protestants in France, but which might well be exercised even against the Catholic subjects themselves of that domain—as in the case of Deleyre. For the secular domination of the clergy stops at nothing: 'the sovereign is no longer sovereign; the priests have become the real masters; the kings are only their officers.'³

But between such arbitrary priestly rule and the perfect, unattainable republic of true Christians there must be some practicable mean. What is to be done about a religion in the actual order of society? The world contained political societies with Protestants and Catholics and others intermingled, and sceptics and atheists along with the various believers. For such a situation 'a national and exclusive religion' is no longer possible. The best arrangement to make about faiths, then, is 'to tolerate all those that tolerate the others, so far as their dogmas have nothing in them contrary to the duties of the citizen. But

to interest himself in them, however, and also to seek further evidence on the case, and he was later moved to project a defense of the Protestants in France.

¹ Final version, Vaughan, vol. ii, pp. 132-3.

² Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, bk. 26, ch. 14, p. 427.

³ The footnote on marriage afterwards seemed so dangerous both to the author and the publisher that Rey was requested to eliminate it while the book was actually in the press. To Rey, Mar. 14, 1762, *C.G.*, vol. vii, No. 1306, p. 148. See also discussion with Ribotte, Jan. 27, 1762, *ibid.*, No. 1264, p. 84 ff.

whenever any one dares to say: "Outside the Church there is no salvation", let him be chased from the State, unless perchance the State be nothing but the Church itself, and the prince none other than the pontiff. Such a dogma is good only in a theocratic government; in every other, it is pernicious. The reason Henry IV is supposed to have had for embracing the Roman Church ought to make every other honest man quit it, and especially every prince who knows how to reason.'

The practical intention of the chapter on *Civil Religion* was thus to exclude intolerance and to establish religious liberty. But Rousseau's statement of his meaning was complicated by the fact that he himself was profoundly convinced of the necessity of religion to morals and the social order which depends ultimately upon the moral will of men. He composed this final chapter with too-mingled sympathies and motives. He tossed back and forth between the ideal unity of religion and politics, of which primitive societies furnished an example, and perhaps Geneva, too, and the spiritual Christianity envisaged in the Gospel which is totally dissociated from any political concerns. As the planner of a political order he looked to the ancient ideal of one religion, one State. With his eye on the principle of liberty guaranteed by the State he was minded to put the essential truths into the very constitution itself so that men might be safeguarded against being forced to believe anything more than they were willing to agree upon as essential to their association. Having worked out for himself a true theism which seemed to be the 'natural religion of man', he saw no harm in making its simple articles of faith part of the contract itself whereby the society is founded. Still the lessons of history, and the nearer present, were arresting; and they sent him the other way. He saw established religion proscribing liberty of opinion and reaching its hand for every portion of human relationship and usurping the functions of the sovereignty of the whole. In this aspect the purely spiritual role of Christianity had something to be said for it. Its proper field is not this or that particular society or State but the general society of humanity. There were moments in this argument when Rousseau even seems to have wearied of devoting himself to so particularistic an ideal as 'the means of strengthening the constitution' of the State. Is it not the peace and well-being of humanity that is the ultimate objective of the moralist? And then, instead of speaking further about his formulas for a civil religion, he simply enunciated a general doctrine of tolerance.

This last chapter was an incomplete argument. Or rather, the argument was drifting away from the State, the subject of

the *Social Contract*. The *Conclusion* pointed to these further questions, which concerned the external relations of the States, the law of nations, leagues, diplomacy, treaties, in short all that has to do with the relations of mankind beyond the confines of their several, particular States. Once these matters had all been comprised in his great project for the *Political Institutions*. But they were outside the scope of this present work. Indeed, Rousseau himself observed, in comment upon this treatise, that he would have done better to hew much closer to the subject at hand. His specific subject was the 'principles of political right'. And his eye was on that largely in the first two books, dealing with obligation and sovereignty and law. But 'the social contract' as an act of the people in assembly sent the author discoursing on that same theme as exemplified in the origins of civil society, of laws, of government, of religious establishments; and then on the control of these institutions. His heart was also set on the solution of that very practical last question. But this was, nevertheless, very distinct from the question of right to which he had meant to confine himself. The outcome was thus really a treatise on two subjects, *The Social Contract* and *The Principles of Political Right*. Rousseau was aware of it when he used the two titles. And he called the attention of the public to the fact that his book was an extract from a work that had not been completed.

He could, however, do nothing at the moment to better this book. After concluding what he had written, trouble gathered around him, grave illness, the recurrence of remorse for his own past, worry over the likely suppression of the *Émile* where he hoped to make amends for all his shortcomings. Months passed, and a certain recovery from depressing exhaustion took place. Then he began to feel that his book, fragment though it was, and incomplete, still merited the attention of the world, and when he dispatched it at last to Rey he said: 'Good-day, Sir. I commend to you once again my last work. Although it is not the sort to gain so prompt a circulation as a romance, I hope it will not wear out, but that if it be not rebuffed by the public, it will be a book for all time.'¹

¹ To Rey, Nov. 7, 1761, C.G., vol. vi, No. 1170, p. 287. *The Social Contract* may have been completed by May 29, 1761, according to a letter to Moulton (No. 1079, pp. 137-8), where he speaks again of 'having quit the pen and the tumultuous profession of author for which I was never born. . . .'. The thought was repeated on June 25, three days before his birthday, in a letter to M. du Parc where he says, 'Up to the age of forty I was wise; at forty I took up the pen, and I put it down before I am fifty, cursing that day of all days of my life when my fool pride made me take it up, and when I saw my happiness, my peace of mind, my health, all go up in smoke without hope of ever recovering them'. (C.G., No. 1092.)

CHAPTER XXI

'THE PHILOSOPHER OF GENEVA'

'I think Rousseau in many things very much resembles Socrates: the Philosopher of Geneva seems only to have more genius than he of Athens, who never wrote anything . . .' David Hume at Paris, December 28th, 1765.¹

A SURMISE of impending persecution made Rousseau only the more determined that his *Profession of Faith* should be published. The moralist's ambition was aroused. His religion seemed the very remedy for all that grievous intolerance in men: it might still serve to unite them in sentiment and belief. So he wanted the *Émile* published without any of the censorings which were being threatened with regard to the new edition of *Julie*.

There was another motive for this concern about the *Émile*. He was in extreme physical suffering, and expected to die; and he felt remorse for his own most grievous fault in life. He turned to Mme de Luxembourg and made to her the confession of having sent five unacknowledged children to the Foundlings' Hospital, and he besought her to have a search made for the first-born at least, giving her the duplicate of a mark which had been attached to the clothes. She set inquiries on foot, with no success, of course, for fifteen years had elapsed since that fatal first step. He could make his amends to humanity, therefore, only with that book *Émile* which he had come to call his 'work of expiation'. And Mme de Luxembourg, seeing his heart so anxiously set on publication, finally made arrangements therefor.²

It was dramatic irony that at this very moment Rousseau should receive a letter of deep concern from 'Jacqueline', the nurse of his own infancy at Geneva. He responded most gratefully to being remembered by her. And he was comforted, too, by his fellow citizen Lenieps who rushed from Paris to his side, and who was later rewarded with a 'basket of cherries' from Montmorency, perhaps in reminiscence of his boyhood delights.³

It was gratifying, too, that so many friends were writing to him in his affliction. He clung to them and kept in close touch with them, even sending a very kindly letter to pastor Vernes in whom he perceived something of the persecutive spirit. He

¹ Hume to Rev. Hugh Blair, *Letters of David Hume*, J. Y. T. Greig, vol. i, p. 530.

² Correspondence with Mme de Luxembourg, June 12, C.G., vol. vi, No. 1083, also Nos. 1084-5, 1097, 1110-11, 1151. The publisher's agreement for *Émile* is given in No. 1121. On the children of Rousseau, see Frederika MacDonald, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ch. 2.

³ To Jacqueline Danel, July 22, No. 1101; to Lenieps, Nos. 1087, 1093.

was fondest of some newer friends, however, disciples who made themselves known in Geneva, pastors Roustan and Moulton, and another in Zürich, Usteri, for these were men who had spontaneously applauded the 'admirable lessons to persecutors' in the *Letters of Julie*. Besides these correspondents there were Mme de Verdelin, his neighbor at Montmorency, Mme de Boufflers, Mme de la Tour de Franqueville, and other women who, charmed by his *Julie*, wrote sometimes under the assumed name of 'Julie' or 'Claire' and lured him into sending them mis-sives in the vein of the novelist. But he occupied himself with more serious communications, too, as when he discussed morals and religion with Dom Descamps, D'Offreville, and Ribotte of Montauban, where there had been a persecution of Protestants.¹

This interesting correspondence kept him busy. But to the anxious author certain fears came more and more into mind, not fears of personal danger but fears about his book *Émile*. It seemed that those who were seeing to its publication were somehow making 'a frightful mystery' of it. Maybe it had actually 'fallen into the hands of the Jesuits'. That could not be endured, the thought of malign priests 'cutting it up and falsifying it at their fancy without any one having any control over them'. These first fears were banished by a letter from the censor himself, Malesherbes, and in place of those emotions arose another one, a remorse for his suspicion of innocent people: 'Oh, how cruel it is for one solitary, ill and sad, to have a disordered imagination . . . !'² Yet there was some ground for suspicion, something which he detected in the situation, that he was not being told the whole truth. And in fact Malesherbes and Mme de Luxembourg did have a 'little mystery', for they were obliged to resort to a subterfuge to bring the *Émile* out at all in France, and before the censor's own term of office was over. But Rousseau was kept in the dark, and Mme de Luxembourg in particular was very silent about the matter. He became excited again, 'the inquietude concerning the fate of my book is consuming and killing me'.³ And he was convinced that they told him nothing because they dared not confess the truth, that the work would have to be suppressed, and he begged them, then, to desist from their efforts and not to compromise themselves on his behalf. They sought to tranquillise him with various, inadequate assurances. He found relief his own way, by resolutely setting to work upon a new copy of his *Profession of Faith*

¹ The correspondence of this period comprises the latter half of *C.G.*, vol. vi. The letter to Vernes, No. 1090; that from Moulton, No. 1054.

² Correspondence with Malesherbes, Nos. 1178, 1189, 1190-1. To Marshal de Luxembourg, No. 1165.

³ Correspondence with Malesherbes, Nos. 1195-6, 1200, 1202-3, 1210.

which he intended to put into the hands of Moul tou for publication after his death, which now seemed imminent. It was not until he received the actual proofs of the *Émile* that he realised his fears about the publication were imaginary. And he felt abjectly humiliated once again over his 'calumnies against two honest publishers. . . . I do not know what blindness, what dark humor inspired in solitude by a frightful ailment, has made me invent, to blacken my own life and the honor of others, that tissue of horrors. . . . The delirium of pain has made me lose my reason before my very life itself: in doing such evil actions, I was nothing but a person clean out of his senses'. He was pouring out this condemnation of himself in a letter to those beloved young disciples at Geneva, but he could not bring himself to send them the letter when it was done. However, he did express to Malesherbes and Mme de Luxembourg and Duchesne the publisher his 'eternal regret at having suspected the probity of another'.¹

The precarious condition of his health made his friends anxious to have some record of his life. Moul tou broached the subject: 'If you have any confidence in the friendship I have for you, and which will not terminate either with your life or my own, leave me your memoirs.' The publisher Rey made his plea also: 'I dare to ask of you a thing I have long had the ambition to realise, and which would be very agreeable to myself and the public, that is your Life, which I should place at the beginning of your works (referring to a projected General Edition).' And Rey offered him an annuity for Thérèse Le Vasseur so that his mind would be perfectly at ease with regard to her in the event of his death. He replied: 'It is difficult to put my Life in a form to appear publicly, because it is inseparably mixed up with many affairs that would compromise the secret of others.' He would not say more by letter—the matter was something to be talked over in person. And, being grateful for Rey's solicitude, he promised to consider the proposal the following spring when they might meet each other.²

That interest in his memoirs turned his thought for a time upon his past life and its mingled good and evil. With or without plan his pen took up the work, producing four letters in the course of several weeks in which he weighed these values and gave an account of himself. He sent them to Malesherbes who had been witness to the recent injustices due to his disordered

¹ Correspondence with Duchesne, Moul tou, Roustau, Malesherbes, and Mme de Luxembourg, Nos. 1204, 1207, 1209, 1215, C.G., vol. vii, Nos. 1221-5.

² Correspondence with Moul tou, Nos. 1231, 1255, and with Rey, Nos. 1235, 1242, 1259.

imagination and anxiety, and who had counselled that he ought to leave his solitude if he wanted tranquillity of spirit.¹ There was a judgment on him implied in that message. Was he supposed to be playing the part of the misanthrope? He might, indeed, have been one, because he hated the injustice and wickedness of men in cities. Yet that hatred had not really been the dominant thing in his life: 'No, my motive is less noble and more personal. . . . It is nothing but that unconquerable spirit of liberty which nothing has been able to quench, and in comparison with which honors, fortune, and reputation itself are as nothing to me'. And this spirit was less one of pride than sheer laziness. 'In a word, the kind of happiness I must have is not so much doing what I want as not doing what I do not want to do.' Hence the drifting away from those 'friends who wanted absolutely to make me happy their way and not in my own'. And the love of solitude was perfectly natural. Solitary walks, walks with a good and simple companion, and with one's dog, these were the joys of life. And in the fields were the birds, in the woods the deer, and about them 'all Nature and her inconceivable Author'. After a morning's work, if no one caught him at home for a visit, he was out in the open and away: 'There you see me master of my own affairs for the rest of the day', and 'none could interpose himself between Nature and me'. The loveliness and variety of Nature solicited his idle attention. He peopled the world with men and women who were suited thereto. And 'soon from the surface of the earth I raised my eyes toward all the beings of Nature, to the universal system of things, to the incomprehensible Being who embraces all'. 'Oh, Great Being; Oh, Great Being', was all he could say in his worship. But all this meant very real companionship, the fellow creatures gathered together in his house and those wilder ones out-of-doors, and the ideal figures of fancy and the Perfect and Infinite Being above all. Why should any one think such solitude was bad for man? And had not his detachment itself enabled him to speak the truth and tell men, nay even show them by example, the mode of life they all ought to lead so far as in them lies? And was he not capable still of profound personal attachments? 'I hate the great; I hate their high estate, their harshness, their prejudice, their littleness and all their vices; and I would hate them even more did I not despise them less'—yet for all that he gave Marshal and Mme de Luxembourg his absolute confidence and placed himself in their hands. The greatest longing of his life at the moment, the final dream of happiness, was to spend many more delicious hours of conversation at the château of

¹ From Malesherbes, *C.G.*, vol. vi, No. 1210.

Montmorency, with no thought of the things hateful or despised in men.¹

But disquiet followed soon upon these dreamings on idle liberty and happiness. Malesherbes had paid him a personal visit at Montmorency. And Rousseau made it plain to him that nothing in the latter part of the *Émile* should be altered—he would rather withdraw it than have the *Profession* appear garbled. He actually made such a proposal to the publisher; and he could now do so with equanimity, because the copy he had been making was at last safely in the hands of Moulton at Geneva. But this disciple had become very excited over the possibilities of danger, and Rousseau had to reassure him: 'No one could be more square with the law than I am.' Besides, the French people were really too 'humane and hospitable' to cause him trouble. But lo, the final proofs of *Émile* soon came to hand, and the 'friend of truth' perceived that 'little mystery' of Malesherbes and Mme de Luxembourg! The title-page had on it: 'Publisher: J. Neaulme, The Hague', whereas the book had really been printed at Paris. That seemed such a futile lie. Would they not actually print the last two volumes (which contained the *Profession*) in Holland, and thus be strictly within the law in regard to that critical part of the book? His plea was in vain, and he began to wonder about the security of his present peace and liberty.²

Meantime the Holland publisher of the *Social Contract*, Rey, had news that was not cheerful. He anticipated a denial of entry into France. He could not promise to undertake any new venture that was apparently even more hazardous (such as the work on religion, for the separate publication of which he had been approached), which blighted Rousseau's fond hope that the copy of the *Profession* in Moulton's hands might be printed by Rey, if it did not come out in France. Incidentally Rey showed that he was not concerned merely about money and sales, for he asked Rousseau, on behalf of his wife, to be godfather to their prospective child. And he raised a question about the note on marriage at the end of the *Social Contract*. The particular case to which that note had reference had been officially settled: the Protestant minister, Rochette, and three gentlemen of the same faith had been condemned to death and executed at Toulouse. It was the height of folly to challenge the decision of the law. And Rousseau asked that his note be withdrawn and another substituted, making the change in the proof himself.

¹ To Malesherbes, *C.G.*, vol. vii, Nos. 1240, 1249, 1260-1.

² Correspondence with Malesherbes, Moulton, Duchesne through Guy, Rey, and Mme de Luxembourg, Nos. 1268, 1276-7, 1280, 1282, 1284-7, 1319, 1341.

And he was so exercised by the situation that he promised Rey, if he had the energy later, he would compose a work on the general question of the treatment of Protestants in France, a fine and tempting project for the good of humanity. Indeed, he even went so far as to write to Toulouse for the data.¹ But that project was swept aside by more exciting news. Word went out from the office of the censor to Rey that the *Social Contract* would not be admitted into France; and close upon it another note urging him, if he valued the safety of the author, to strike his name from the title-page. And it was further stated that it would only be an act of grace on the part of the government of France if the copies of the work which had already been consigned to that country were even to be returned to Holland.² These messages were promptly communicated to Rousseau. What did he think about them?

Meantime, *Émile*, being highly sponsored, came out on May 23, 1762.³ It was printed without alterations. Emboldened by this, Rousseau answered Rey's inquiries confidently, and said he would not think of having his name struck off the title-page but would acknowledge the *Social Contract* openly as all the other things from his pen. 'I know, as regards my person, my conduct, and my speech, what obedience and respect I owe to the government and the laws of the country in which I live, and I should be very put out indeed if in that regard any Frenchman himself were better in his duty than I am here. But as for my principles of doctrine, the doctrines of myself, a republican, published in a Republic, there is in France no magistrate nor tribunal, nor "parlement", nor minister, nor the King himself, who would even have the right to question me on that score and demand any account of me. If they find my book bad for the country, they can prohibit its being admitted, and if they find I am wrong, they can refute me, that's all.' Rey was not, therefore, to be alarmed for his safety. The government of France was too well informed as to the law of nations to violate the rights of a poor invalid whose life was being passed peacefully in the country. The work itself was no libel or satire, and it never went 'beyond the bounds of purely philosophical discussion'. And surely republicans could discuss, in books published out of France, the foundations and faults of monarchy in general when the subjects of monarchies were in turn always criticising the principles of republics. So wrote the lover of justice and equality. And at this moment he was 'the just man' himself, for he wanted

¹ Correspondence with Rey, Nos. 1290, 1296, 1313-14, 1332; and Ribotte, No. 1342.

² Nos. 1357, 1367.

³ Nos. 1363-5, 1383.

to share with Rey the loss he would sustain from the failure to get his book admitted into France, though of this Rey would hear not a word, professing himself amply recompensed on the whole from his dealings with this most honest of men: 'I only hope that they will not add persecution to your ills and that they will leave you in peace. . . . The reasons you give me of the right you have to discuss how men ought to be governed, and how they are in actuality, are without reply, but you can do nothing against force; one groans and must keep silent then. You have happily had the hardihood to speak out, and posterity will wish you well for it. I am wholly yours, and with all my heart.'¹

On June 4th, a few days after Rousseau's brave words to Rey, the sale of *Émile* itself was prohibited in France. The premonition of danger spread abroad amongst his friends who called on him to save himself. But he was still unafraid, knowing himself in the right. 'They say the "parlement" of Paris is going to dispose of me; we must let them go ahead; and don't compromise yourself by letters on that affair.' To another, 'J.-J. Rousseau does not know how to hide.' And on that same day, which he knew to be the day the court convened for action, he wrote a long letter to Moulton to explain that, while he could get out of his trouble by a little careful explaining, he had a 'firm resolution to say nothing but the truth and to compromise no one', meaning particularly Mme de Luxembourg and Malesherbes; and therefore he would let them proceed against himself in silence. 'Dear Moulton, if the motto I've used is anything more than pure talk, here is the occasion to show myself worthy of it, and to what else can I better employ the little life remaining to me? However men may treat me, what can they do that Nature and my ailments would not soon have done without them? They might take my life away, which my condition makes a burden to me anyway, but they shall not take my liberty; I shall keep it whatever they do, in their bonds and behind their walls. My career is ended. There is nothing more to do but crown it. I have rendered glory to God, I have spoken for the good of men. O friend, for so great a cause neither thou nor I will ever refuse to suffer. To-day "parlement" meets. I await in peace what it pleases them to order concerning myself.'²

When this leave-taking reached Moulton at Geneva, he and Roustau together wrote a passionate appeal to him to save himself, pleading that he was not at all in the same situation as Socrates, who had been condemned by the laws of his own country.³ And poor Moulton was so violently affected that he

¹ Nos. 1382, 1397.² Nos. 1399, 1400-1.³ No. 1409.

was ill for several days, which reminds one of what happened at Socrates' last hours, according to the story in the *Phaedo*, that Plato was absent, being too ill to come.

An order was issued for his arrest. The Prince de Conti headed it off for a time, word passing on privately meanwhile to Rousseau's friends in Paris. 'Your book burned will do you no harm. Your person cannot stand prison. Consult you neighbors'—came the message from Mme de Créqui. And his neighbor Mme de Luxembourg wrote more imperatively: 'In the name of God, come; it is the greatest mark of friendship that you could ever give me.'¹ And they sent for him in the night and spirited him away to the frontier.

Other friends remained in the dark as to his whereabouts, but they wrote and offered him aid. Thus Coindet at Paris who, after being permitted to see to the engravings for *Julie*, had associated himself a little too familiarly with his master and had been rebuked therefor, now wrote: 'I am still in the same [banking] house, but my liberty is at my disposal. If you have enough confidence in my zeal, and if there still remains in you any remembrance of that friendship which made the happiness of my life, I offer to join you wheresoever you are, and to go with you wherever you will go, in such manner as will be most suitable to your health and your taste. This proposition is not made lightly and in the moment of enthusiasm and sentiment that the misfortune of one dear to us inspires; it is reflected. . . . A word, and I leave for you. . . . O Rousseau, how sweet it would be for me if you would make me know that the heart that loves you is worthy of you.'²

Another letter was from D'Alembert, who had been so prompt before to aid the persecuted and who now recommended him to take refuge in one of the States ruled by Frederick of Prussia, and in particular, Neuchâtel, which was governed by Earl Marshal George Keith, a man 'who would receive and treat you as the patriarchs of the Old Testament received and treated persecuted virtue'.³

But Rousseau had gone to Yverdon in Berne, and to the house of an old and trusted friend, Daniel Roguin. On June 15 a note went back to Marshal de Luxembourg: 'At last I have set foot on this land of justice and liberty, which I ought never to have left. . . .' Another message went at once to Moulton, admitting that he had guessed wrong about not being persecuted, and explaining why he had acted contrary to his own

¹ Nos. 1402-3. Cf. M. Josephson, *J.-J. Rousseau*, pp. 380-2, on the real danger to Malesherbes and Marshal and Mme de Luxembourg.

² No. 1408.

³ No. 1411.

intention and had not stayed in France. 'It was not a matter concerning only myself who certainly never approved the method they had taken in that affair (publishing the *Émile*) but of persons who for the love of me had taken an interest in it and whom, if I were once arrested, my silence itself, since I did not want to lie, would have compromised. I had to take to flight, . . . However it be, I swear to you, dear Moulou, before God who reads in my heart, that I have done nothing in all this contrary to the laws, that I have not only been perfectly in accordance with the law but that I had most authentic proofs of it and that before departing I voluntarily destroyed these proofs for the tranquillity of others. I arrived here yesterday morning, and I am going to wander in these mountains until I find a refuge wild enough to spend the rest of my miserable days there in peace.'¹

The unbelieved persecution was at last a fact. True he had the comfort of the letters that followed him in due time, and showed him how many friends he had in France and Switzerland. In Holland, Rey took up the cudgels for 'the most honest man I know' and even demanded that the editor of the Gazette at Utrecht should correct the statement as 'calumny' that the author had 'taken to flight'.²

But at Geneva, Dr. Tronchin was hostile, and he communicated his sentiments to pastor Vernes who seemed not unwilling to hear them. Voltaire talked, and relished some mischief. The forces of hostility there were mobilising to build a wall against the return of the citizen. His many sympathisers were not entirely whole-hearted in their defense of his books, for they were displeased with some of his views on religion, although they loved and defended him for his position, and for his spirit, so Moulou assured him. The governing council at Geneva had indeed prohibited the sale of the *Social Contract* and *Émile*, with a view to examining them; 'our bourgeois say, none the less, that the *Social Contract* is the arsenal of liberty'. Nevertheless, it was clear by the increasing furor that the people felt more deeply about their religion than about patriotism, and Moulou besought him to write a letter for public consumption explaining to his fellow-citizens his own true adherence to Protestant Christianity—and this letter would aid his friends in stemming the tide of hostility stirred up by interested parties, and in making sure of his return to Geneva.³

At Yverdon, Rousseau remained unconcerned, or rather more concerned about the companion of seventeen years of his life, whom he had left behind him, than about his fellow citizens. He was staying with the family of his friend Roguin

¹ Nos. 1412-13.

² No. 1423.

³ Nos. 1414, 1420.

and wanted a *ménage* of his own, and Thérèse. So he wrote to Marshal de Luxembourg to say that what he did next would depend on her wishes, and asked that she be allowed to make her choice, whether or not to join him in his retreat, entirely free from any influence or insinuation, 'for the great desire to have her with me is only the second of my desires, the first will always be that she may be happy and content, and I fear that she might find my seclusion too solitary, that she will be wearied of it here. . . .' To her he wrote thus: 'My dear child, you will learn with great pleasure that I am safe. Oh, that I might soon learn, on my side, that you are well, and that you love me always. I was thinking of you when I left, and during all my journey, and I am at present thinking of a way to reunite us. Consider what it is you want to do, and only follow your own inclination in this matter, for whatever repugnance I have to being separated from you, after our living so long together, I *can* do it nevertheless without suffering, although, indeed, with regret; and even though your coming to live in this country will make some difficulties, they will not deter me, however, if you agree to come here. Take your own counsel, my dear girl, and see if you can stand my refuge. If you come, I shall try to make it happy for you, and I shall even make provision, as far as it will be possible, for you to be able to fulfil the duties of your religion as often as you like. But if you prefer to remain where you are, do so without scruple, and I shall always endeavor with all my power to make your life comfortable and pleasant. I know nothing of what is transpiring, but the iniquities of the parlement cannot any longer surprise me, and there are no horrors for which I am not already fully prepared. My dear, don't despise me because of my misery. Men can make me unhappy but they cannot ever make me wicked or unjust, and you know better than any one that I have done nothing contrary to the laws. . . . I don't presume that the "parlement", unjust as it is, will have the meanness to confiscate my chattels. However, if that should come about, come with nothing, my child, and I shall be consoled for all, when I have you close by me. . . .' Then followed reminders of things to do, the accounts to pay, books to be returned, even medicines to be provided, all carefully detailed in a business-like way. And he turned back again to the humiliation of having to take to flight. 'You know the true motive of my departure: if no one had been compromised in that unhappy affair, I would certainly never have left, since I have nothing with which to reproach myself.' But, lest that be misconstrued, he added, he was grateful to Marshal and Madame de Luxembourg for taking her under

their protection. 'Adieu, then, I put all things up to you, but especially that you spare yourself and look out for yourself.'¹

And when Thérèse received that in due time, she replied: 'My dear friend, what joy I have had to receive your dear message. I assure you that my mind was concerned with nothing other than sorrow at not seeing you and at our separating without my being able to tell you all my sentiments; that my heart has always been yours and that it will never change as long as God gives you life, and myself as well. What satisfaction it will be for me to have us reunited and to pass our days of sorrow together. I wait for the moment to rejoin you and embrace you from the bottom of my heart. You know well that my heart is yours and that I have always told you that wherever you might be I wanted to go with you, were it seas to cross and precipices to go find you, that one had only to say it to me and I should go very quickly—but they had not judged it wise to tell me so. I hadn't succeeded in finding it out and since they didn't want to tell me anything, I assure you that I was afraid something had happened to you which they were concealing from me. My poor mind was good for nothing, nor my head—you have wholly restored me to myself. But it will be much more so when I shall be close by you and be able to show all the joy and tenderness of my heart which you know I have always had for you and which will not end with the grave. It's my heart that speaks, not my lips. I look forward to the moment of rejoining you; I have nothing more but you, my dear friend. I am, with all the friendship and gratitude possible, and attachment, my good friend, your humble and good friend . . . P.S. I assure you I shall never forget in my life all the Marshal and Madame have done for you and the grief they felt in your going off and the blow that has come to you which has been a thunderbolt for all your friends.'²

Another public blow befell him. At Geneva, on June 19th, both *Émile* and *The Social Contract* were burned, and another order for his arrest issued, in case he were to set foot on his native land.³ Thus, proscribed from France, he was now publicly warned not to return to Geneva. The spirit of persecution was spreading, it seemed, to the very land itself of justice and liberty.

Thereupon he wrote a quiet and dignified note to the local bailiff at Yverdun asking whether he would be allowed asylum there. He would prefer, if necessary, to leave the states under the jurisdiction of the Senate of Berne without their issuing an

¹ Nos. 1417-18.

² No. 1429.

³ Nos. 1421, 1424.

order to get out.¹ He made every effort possible to avoid further publicity. When he realised how very active Moulton was in espousing his cause in Geneva he judged that this was likely to create dissension in the State and warned his disciple: 'Learn to tack a little, my young friend, and don't ever go straight against the passions of men when you want to bring them to reason.' Later, when the excitement died down, the authorities would surely see the matter in a different light, and he could then be very helpful toward bringing them around. It was wrong to do anything at the moment which might disrupt the State merely on account of one of its citizens. 'My intention is not to play a role, but to do my own duty.'²

This very message crossed one from Moulton which showed that he had anticipated the lesson of his master. The religious devotion was at its height and could not be fronted. Were Rousseau to turn up at Geneva at that moment, a serious division would take place in the State, dangerous to its safety and peace. Some would like even to deprive him of his title to citizenship, claiming he had never been received back in 1754 according to the proper formalities. And Moulton, in excitement himself, and proud for his friend, put the question: would not Rousseau himself take the step of renouncing his citizenship? Not that he wanted him to do so, but it was simply the natural question of one who sympathised with a man of genuine spirit. And a better reason than pride was implicit in the letter—to renounce his citizenship would be to remove a bone of contention amongst the Genevans and let them enjoy the blessings of peace and unity.³ These thoughts Rousseau kept in his heart, but he did not then act on them.

Moulton was overcome with admiration for his master: 'Dear Rousseau, how many souls are there that have the stuff of yours? How many are there, indeed, that could be even capable of appreciating and feeling its worth? I did not know it right well myself: I should never have believed that it would unite so much moderation with warmth and sublimity. I avow to you that I feared your first impulses, as you can see from my preceding letter, where I tried to guard against their effects. You are great in all things, your glory would have lacked something without your misfortunes.'⁴

Moulton had insisted on some kind of letter or note which could be used by him to win over support against the hostile element. He received a brief statement: 'Don't go out of your way to speak about me. But on the proper occasion say to all

¹ No. 1422.

³ No. 1425.

² No. 1424.

⁴ No. 1426.

our magistrates that I shall always respect them, even when they are unjust; and to all our fellow-citizens that I shall always love them, even though they are thankless. I feel in my misfortunes that I do not really have a heart that hates, and it is a consolation for me to be conscious that in adversity also I am good. Adieu, virtuous Moulton, if my heart is thus for the others, you must surely understand how it regards you.¹

His moderation and public silence were wise, and to good purpose. The passions of the first uproar were subsiding. He put off into the distant future all thought of a return to Geneva in person. 'One would be a fool in my situation to run into any new disagreements when duty does not require it. I shall always love my country, but I can't look forward to any sojourn there with pleasure.' Yet it was pleasing, for all that, to hear that two of the syndics, Mussard and Professor Jalabert, were doing valiant service on his behalf with the government. The 'Venerable Company of Pastors' under the lead of the dignified Jacob Vernet were all along moderate and not ill-disposed. The two condemned books were being read and understood. And the way in which the Republic of Geneva imitated the monarchy of France in regard to these books began to seem a little foolish, even in Geneva, and the authorities sought to save their faces about the order for his arrest, pretending it had not been issued, and even refusing to transmit it upon demand, to the cousin of Rousseau. In the abatement of feeling Moulton saw the promise of a total change of attitude. By September, surely, Rousseau would be received with open arms in Geneva.²

But officialdom was the same everywhere. The Senate of Berne issued an order for him to get out of their State in fifteen days. 'Is the Council', Rousseau asked indignantly, 'one of the branches of the court of "parlement"?' And having seen, shortly before this, the publication in the Berne Gazette of the original accusation made by the French authorities, and knowing that no copies of his book were as yet available to the government of Berne, he inferred that their action was taken simply on the basis of that libellous document. Indignation was rising in his heart against such injustice of condemning him without reading or hearing him, and promptly issuing official orders which would never be rescinded even though a subsequent perusal of the books in question might change the opinion—and so he would be driven from pillar to post and never allowed to settle down. All because of that damnable calumny in the accusation, that his books were irreligious and corrupting! Would no one rise up, he cried out, to expose the falsity of that cursed document, not to

¹ No. 1430.² Nos. 1447-8.

defend him so much as to point out the truth? That would be the only stop to this fever of persecution.¹

Moulton took that appeal to heart. It was up to him to do that necessary work. Would Rousseau allow him; would he send him some notes for it? It could be printed in Zürich and all would be well.²

Now the practical question was, where to go from Berne? A disinterested friend since his early days in Paris, Mme de Chenonceaux, suggested England, which was also recommended strongly by Mme de Boufflers, very anxious to help him, for the love of the Prince de Conti, and she assured him that her friend David Hume would look out for him there. She had, in fact, written to Hume who did respond at once but misunderstood Rousseau's whereabouts and misaddressed the letter to him so that it only arrived many months later. Mme de Boufflers had another alternative, the offer of a friend's château at Schleyden in Germany. Another suggestion, though too late for action, came from a young disciple, Usteri, in Zürich. For all these suggestions he was grateful. But England and Germany were too much for him to attempt in his condition, and he bethought himself of D'Alembert's prompt advice at the start to seek shelter at Neuchâtel under the protection of the governor of the King of Prussia. Besides, relatives of Daniel Roguin lived just across the frontier. So he went there about July 9th or 10th, and took up his abode at Môtiers-Travers.³

And the lover of liberty and hater of kings had to throw himself on the mercy of Frederick the Great. 'Order my fate,' he wrote at once to the governor, Earl Marshal Keith, 'I am subject to your orders; but if you order me to depart in the state I am now in, it is impossible for me to obey, and besides, I don't know where to flee.' This note started an interesting relationship with the rough and ready Field-Marshal who had once upon a time been proscribed from Scotland. This old man, full of independence and sardonic humor, who respected good spirit and was not inclined to deferences of any sort, was nevertheless whimsical enough to indulge in dreams, too, of returning at long last to his native land, and taking this other proscrip with him, to set up house together with David Hume as a third of their kind. To him Rousseau sent this direct and unceremonious appeal, addressed to Frederick: 'I have said a good deal that is bad about you; I shall probably say more such things: however, chased from France, from Geneva, from the canton of Berne, I have come to seek an asylum in your States. It is my

¹ Nos. 1432, 1446-7.

² C.G., vol. viii, No. 1454.

³ C.G., vol. vii, Nos. 1431, 1438, 1441; C.G., vol. viii, No. 1452.

fault perhaps not to have begun with this—that eulogy is the kind of which you are worthy. Sire, I have not merited any grace from you, and I do not ask any; but I have felt I ought to declare to your majesty that I am in your power, and that I have willed to be so: your majesty can dispose of me as you like.’¹ Keith forwarded this message, admiring its spirit, and respecting its honesty.

Waiting for the answer, Rousseau resided on a property belonging to the niece of his friend Roguin, and he prepared to have Thérèse come to live with him in quiet seclusion. His first work was to write the many letters of gratitude he owed to those who had aided him in France and Yverdon.

From Geneva, however, came news again to disturb his peace and quiet. The charges of irreligion were so bad that Moulton was now fully resolved to undertake the work of defense. A Colonel Pictet, evidently a man of the old Genevan stamp, wrote a letter to the Council protesting the illegality of their proceedings against an absent citizen, as an assault on the liberties of the bourgeois, and he too was then proceeded against by the authorities. Word came, also, that the order issued by the Senate of Berne had been incited by private individuals in the government of Geneva. That meant an organised plan to enlist all governments against him. And then J. Vernes, once so paternally blessed at his marriage and the confidant of his religious views, and strangely silent during all the recent actions, this young minister now wrote in words that were affectionate in form but showed himself to have taken offense at the fact that any ‘doubts’ had been exposed to the public in the Vicar’s *Profession*. ‘Even if all you said about Christianity were sound, what good could you do to society by removing from it one of its strongest supports? . . . But by your difficulties on the score of Christianity you have troubled hearts that are strong in the faith, taken away what remained in a number of others, and made our libertines triumphant. . . .’² That betrayed the theologian. It showed why the others were so reluctant to acknowledge him, for they held aloof, neither seconding the Council of the State nor protesting on his behalf. So the clergy would have to be won over by some special action on his part. He felt as if he had to cry out against all this or stifle. How that hateful charge of the parlement of Paris had spread horror about him and his book, and how Voltaire and the procurator Tronchin were using it for all it was worth! Apparently his life would be spent driven from place to place by orders to leave, his books being read afterwards, but governments never retracting. He

¹ Nos. 1457–8–9.² No. 1464.

relieved his feelings by these 'long Jeremiads' to Mme de Luxembourg, and then kept silent, waiting to hear the decision of the King of Prussia.

Nevertheless, his thoughts were troubled. From many different quarters he received confirmation of the belief that the 'particular parties' responsible for the order of Berne were Voltaire and Tronchin, the latter a politician who managed things so as to be dominant in the affairs of government, the former a malicious mischief-maker taking revenge, and both of them resenting the way Geneva looked to the citizen beyond the border as her spokesman on the principles of politics and religion. 'A State in which the Poet and the Juggler reign means nothing more to me; it would be better to be a stranger than an enemy to all that.' Besides, the reformed ministers were apparently quite willing to join with the papists against him. He had formerly heard good of Zürich, but Usteri blasted those hopes by confessing that the tide was turning against him there. The Gazette of Berne with its reproduction of the charges of Paris was now being used with effect in that quarter. It was simply horrible to think that charges from Paris could bring about all this concert of sentiment and action in Switzerland. Writing to a friend, Marcet de Mézières, who was aiding the cause of the generous Colonel Pictet, Rousseau again detailed the injustices of which he had been the victim, the decrees without hearings, the condemnation of his works without their being read, except possibly the *Social Contract* which had actually taught that religion is necessary to a well-constituted State, though not 'the Christianity of to-day'. Even if the author were in error, that was not a crime, surely, but simply a mistake in a matter of principle. As to the political principles of that book they were two in number: 'The first, that rightfully the sovereignty belongs always to the people; the second, that aristocratic government is the best of all.' That letter might well have been made the basis of his own defense before the court of opinion at Geneva, but it was not so employed.¹

A plan seems to have been forming in his mind, to answer the Paris charge in some such manner as indicated in the letter to Marcet de Mézières, by giving an explanation of his principles, and thus to put an end to the malignant influence of that document which was being broadcast. Marshal de Luxembourg sent him the printed order of the charge, and some notes on its defects by a disinterested party. But it so happened that Mme de Boufflers had written from Paris arguing that the legality of the court of France could not be questioned, which drew

¹ Nos. 1472-3, 1474.

fire from him, and he told her in detail, more than to his other correspondents, the effects of that fatal charge on the ministers of the Church who now seemed to consider Spinoza, Diderot, Voltaire, and Helvétius to be veritable saints beside himself, and were willing to join forces with the 'philosophic party' to put him down. Nevertheless, her objection seems to have made him give up that plan of a direct attack on the charge itself. Besides, he was assured by Moulton that the ministers under the lead of the moderate Vernet, who hated Voltaire, would stand with him. Time itself was with them, and it would not be long before Moulton's defense would appear. There was a good omen, too, in the fact that his disciple Roustan, who disagreed with him on some points, intended to write a *refutation*. Nothing could be better for his cause than some disinterested discussion. 'His project to refute me is excellent and can even be useful to me and very honorable. It is good that they see that he combats me and yet that he is devoted to me; it is good that they know my friends are not attached to me by any party-spirit but by a sincere love of the truth, which unites us all.' And he gave Moulton sound advice about treating the Paris charge, and expressed his pleasure over the prospect of a just criticism of himself: 'What a touching voice is that of the Christian bringing out the faults of his friend. And what a spectacle, too, to see him cover the oppressed with the protecting mantle of the Gospel.' Yet he admitted his despair of ever enlightening the Genevans: 'I have found the public stupidity greater than I ever had reason to expect.' How could the religious have been made the satellites of Voltaire and the philosophic party who were making fools of them all? Anyhow, the plan to write a public attack himself on the charge of the court of Paris was abandoned, in favor of the prospective writings of these disciples.¹

Waiting was hard when almost every day brought new messages and opinions about the doings at Geneva. Moulton's impulsive suggestion recurred to mind: if he renounced his citizenship he would be done with all the annoyances, because all the ties with Geneva would be cut and he could then live in peace, which his health badly needed. So he wrote very confidentially to Marcet de Mézières, and intimated that in making such a renunciation he would do it with a piece of writing which might thereafter serve to re-establish the liberties and rights of the citizens of Geneva. 'I am ill, dear friend, I need repose, I love peace; and I'll never find it again in Geneva or amongst the Genevans. I have decided, then, to renounce my country, and even to do so publicly; but since in this I am

¹ Nos. 1468, 1476, 1478, 1482, 1485.

only consulting my own convenience and my honor, without letting passion mix with it, I shall await, without being in any hurry, the favorable moment, and until then I shall let them triumph in peace. That renunciation is my last writing, the one with which I want to end, and I shall endeavor to make it useful still to my old country.' Further incentive to doing this came from Mme de Luxembourg, who in commenting on the prospect of his defense by the minister Moultau added: 'I should much rather have you yourself charged with your own defense—but these are futile words, I know, I am saying.'¹ Nevertheless, this became another plan in his mind.

This plan was quickly scotched—for the time being. On August 16, 1762 came the reply of Frederick of Prussia, sent from the battlefield, instructing Keith to give the proscribed author protection, adding something for the governor's ears, who promptly retailed it to Rousseau: 'He hopes that you will not write on any risky matter that could excite too lively sensations in Neuchâtel heads and occasion the clamors of all our preachers . . . inclined to dispute and full of fanaticism. I will write him that you do not want either to read or to write or to speak. . . .' And Keith added that he had it from good authority in Berne that Voltaire was responsible for their action and that the people in Berne were angry at the poet for his machinations. Rousseau wrote at once to Keith to say he would not promise anything about not writing. But he definitely gave up the project that was in his mind, and informed Marcet de Mézières of the fact. He was safe now at Môtiers. He could afford to bide his time, at least until his friends published their works. He would arrange for the publication of Roustan's 'refutation'. Only in case these failed to do any good, would he cut the Gordian knot by giving up his citizenship.²

If that were to come to pass, however, it might jeopardise his stay in Neuchâtel, and so he had to bethink himself again about an asylum. England appealed more than ever. Writing to Mme de Boufflers who had quoted to him a postscript in a letter to her from David Hume, he spoke warmly of his appreciation of that man, a writer so magnificently independent in his *History of England* and yet so dispassionate. 'I have at times put passion into my inquiries, and he has put into his only his intelligence and his fine genius; self-love has often made me go astray by my very aversion for what is bad or what seemed to me to be so: I have hated despotism as a republican and intolerance as a theist. Mr. Hume has simply said: "There you see what intolerance does and there is what despotism does": he has seen

¹ Nos. 1486-7.

² Nos. 1491-2-3.

on all sides the object which passion has only let me see from one side. . . .¹ This tribute was an expression of his own deep desire to be reasonable and dispassionate at this crisis. The only writing he dared think of at the moment was nothing new for the public but simply the issuing of a General Edition of his works, to show in complete form what his views really had been from start to finish.¹

So matters stood with him on August 23rd, 1762, three months after *Émile* made its first appearance, when some news came in remarkable conjunction. An anonymous work, *The Sermons of Fifty*, attributed to Voltaire, was being circulated in Geneva, and it had doubtless been printed there, though it consisted of a horrible and disgusting onslaught on Christianity. The absurdity of such a thing being tolerated in the Geneva that had banned his *Émile*! At the same time the Gazette of Holland reported that *Émile* was being prohibited there: 'I never would have believed that a government as wise as yours (speaking to Rey) would have imitated the stupid example of the sheep-like troupe without deigning to have my book examined by some man who had at least some common sense.' That dashed his latest hope of getting out a General Edition of his writings with Rey. It made him indignant to be thus countered at every turn in his most innocent desires. He was very sorry for Rey, too, who was losing so much money because of the turn of events. Nothing further in the way of publishing seemed possible. Anything new seemed debarred, in France, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Holland itself. Yet he was about ready to try it anyhow, it seems, to answer for himself against the whole lot of charges. It is significant that he suggested to Rey that he needed copies of his two last writings: 'I don't have either the *Social Contract* or *Émile* here, and I have great need of them.'²

The next day he took a step of his own to put an end to the wretched business. It was to send a letter to the pastor of the reformed church at Môtiers, declaring himself sincerely a member of the faith ever since rejoining the Church in 1754: 'I desire', he added, 'to be always united externally to the Church as I am at the bottom of my heart, and however consoling it would be for me to participate in the communion of the faithful, I desire it, I protest to you, as much for their edification and for the honor of the cult as for my own particular advantage: for it is not good that they should think that a man of good faith who reasons cannot be a member of Jesus Christ. . . .' That was the moralist teaching his lesson. It was the citizen, too, making his advances toward peace with the ministers of the nation,

¹ Nos. 1494, 1498.² Nos. 1496, 1498.

acknowledging fealty to the Church. The pastor, Professor de Montmollin, had a personal interview with him and referred the request to his Consistory; and they admitted him to the communion.¹

The act gratified many in Geneva, for it was very soon noised abroad, though not, indeed, by Rousseau himself, who stayed very quiet and did nothing in a public way. Incidentally, Montmollin himself showed the quality of his Christian charity by putting a carriage at the disposal of Thérèse so that she might be able to attend her own Church which was at some distance. That letter to Montmollin brought out on the scene some very old friends, such as De Luc, who had been deeply hurt in their piety, because of what he had written on revelation, and who had not been able to fight his battle with conviction—now they were morally armed with a direct profession of allegiance and they meant to use it to advantage. But still others were just as busy trying to embroil him with the ministers. They had sent an anonymous letter to him about Vernet, their leader, who was known to be preparing a refutation. Rousseau did not mind a refutation, since that was honest dealing with his opinions, and he forwarded the anonymous letter straight to Vernet, assuring him that no wiles of that sort could influence his conduct and feelings toward him. He expressed the hope that Vernet would not treat him, in the refutation, as one separated from the church, and mentioned the fact that he had written a letter to Montmollin asking to be accepted in the communion. But the hostile parties had not reached the end of their devices. They took advantage of the new situation and sent a letter to the Company of Pastors stating it was commonly understood in the French Academy and elsewhere in Paris that their body had officially approved of Rousseau's book. And there was inserted in the Gazette of Utrecht an item publishing this bit of news to the world. The Company of Pastors held a solemn conclave to consider the position into which they were now placed. Moulthou assured Rousseau the ministers were not antagonistic to him, since Vernet understood, as well as he did himself, that all these rumors emanated from Voltaire and D'Alembert—it was an old trick of theirs to represent the clergy of Geneva as really less orthodox than they pretended. Rousseau was not so sure. He was uneasy at the ramifications of the scheming that was going on in both Geneva and Paris. Still, he trusted to the judgment of his disciple who was on the spot, especially when he heard from an enthusiastic visitor, Professor Hess, who came on his honeymoon from Zürich to spend a day

¹ No. 1501.

with him, how valiantly Moulton was countering Voltaire and the Juggler. He was so pleased with his visitor, as well as his correspondent in Zürich, Usteri, that he planned thus far ahead a spring-time jaunt there, inviting Moulton to go with him, and he remarked that he hoped eventually to 'leave his bones in a land of liberty'. Geneva was no longer the place for him, no matter what would come of the efforts of his friends there.¹

Marshal de Luxembourg wrote from Paris about this time, to say that Voltaire and Tronchin were absolutely discrediting themselves in the eyes of the world at large and that they really had no power to do any hurt to his honor. Incidentally, the Marshal thoroughly approved of his adopting an Armenian, loose-flowing costume, as a style of apparel better suited to his particular ailments than the breeches of the period. And this man of affairs who had had occasion to observe his friend quite closely for several winters suggested that it was also better for his health if he were to occupy himself with something. It could not be with the pen, though he did let himself go in a letter to his affectionate friend of the days at Montmorency, Mme de Verdelin, on the subject of his persecution by both State and Church and the conspiracy that was now being disclosed to separate him from his friends in the clergy. And he let loose again at the wickedness of the original charge of 'parlement' which had started all this torment—that charge drafted by two priests who lived in Montmorency. But he quickly turned from those to other subjects. On the day of his sudden departure he had entrusted to Mme de Verdelin the care of his old cat, Minette, and his thought turned that way: 'I beg you, above everything else, to see that she always has her liberty and that no dog worries the life out of her, for she is gentle, fearful, and very easy to frighten.' And as his thoughts, so were his occupations, household ones. His restless fingers, that hardly dared touch the pen, were busy making lacings, and the first of these he sent to a young woman who was about to enter matrimony. And the news of this was spread abroad by others as quickly as his more serious doings, and it all assumed a color of singularity because it was given such publicity. He himself was quite merry about it: 'I have taken to a long garb, and I make lacings: see, I am more than half woman: would that I always were so! Madame, I have tried not to dishonor my sex; I hope not to be rebuffed by yours.'²

The weighty doings of very serious men concerned about their honor and the Church could not long be kept out of sight. Moulton sent word that the Company had taken no action on

¹ Nos. 1510; 1512-3-4.

² Nos. 1516, 1517.

the false report of their endorsement of his book. The letter to Montmollin was really proving a blow to his enemies. Vernet was content, and his old friend De Luc, who appreciated sincerity, had now come out strongly for him. He could come to Geneva now, any day he chose. Rousseau was overjoyed, and wrote gratefully to his cousin, Theodore Rousseau, about the change of sentiment regarding himself.¹

They were not reckoning with the enemy, despite the earlier suspicions of a profoundly-laid scheme. Unauthentic copies of the letter to Montmollin were being circulated in Geneva, in as many as 200 copies, according to Moulton. Rousseau had had nothing whatsoever to do with the releasing of this letter. This the ministers did not know. The currency given it looked to them like a move to commit their body to his views, since it represented him as united with them. Vernet in particular was embarrassed by the situation. He had intended to make his refutation in such a manner as not to hurt the author personally, but yet to make it perfectly clear, as he said, that 'the clergy are not Deists'. To him, however, the *Profession of Faith* was simply Deism. And now the letter to Montmollin virtually claimed his faith to be identical with that of the reformed Church! Knowing the existence of this letter, Vernet was in a quandary. He could not write publicly about it, because it was not a public document; and yet, to say anything at all without refuting the inference everywhere being drawn, would be to leave the claim of the Gazette of Utrecht unchallenged, and to consent unwittingly to an endorsement of *Émile*. He saw no way out of it except to ask Rousseau himself to make a 'formal retraction' and to profess his religion according to the Church. And after all, he pleaded, were not the doubts set forth in the latter part of that work, merely relics from his youthful immaturity, which might be considered 'inexcusable imprudence' ('pardon the term', he added), for him to have printed at this time. Would Rousseau retract? And meantime pastor Sarasin wrote to Montmollin from Geneva, vigorously taking him to task for his action in admitting Rousseau to communion, and poor Montmollin who had done it all in Christian charity was obliged to give an account of himself to the ministers of Geneva who constituted themselves a tribunal on the conduct of the faithful. Trouble was thus starting seriously among the theologians.²

Of course Rousseau would not retract. The 'doubts and difficulties' were his own, and he would not disavow them on demand. But he did go as far as he could by giving Montmollin what was in effect his 'explanations', which were transmitted to

¹ Nos. 1524, 1526.

² Nos. 1534-5-6.

the ministers and ought really to have satisfied them, especially as Montmollin was able to assure them that from then on *Émile* would not be permitted to circulate any further in the county of Neuchâtel. But the ministers wanted a public retraction from his own hand, one just as public as the *Profession of Faith* had become. He was, in short, to humble himself before the Church. It was now a question of the honor of the clergy.

Curiously enough the situation as regards the government was much better at the time. Professor Jalabert who was in office assured him he could return to Geneva whenever he pleased and that the citizens in general wanted the opportunity to come out openly for him as 'their man'. Nevertheless Rousseau perceived, from his knowledge of the clergy, that this was but an invitation to conflict and division in the State, and he judiciously refrained from taking the step. He wrote to Col. Pictet who was partly responsible for the new state of the question, though still under charges for having dared to stand up for the rights of citizens, and he explained to him that it was not wise for him to return, really perilous for himself and of no prospective use to any one, and that he wanted at this crisis of his life to go slowly, not to listen to passion but wait until he would better discern the true facts of the situation. At the last extremity he would do nothing more than take up the pen in his own defense.¹

The great need of explaining, if not of defending, his views was becoming clear. To be sure, advices from Mme de Verdelin in Paris told that Voltaire was really discredited by his machinations and that the Oratorians of Montmorency with whom Rousseau had frequented had ostracised the two priests responsible for the original bill of charges which had set the various governments in operation, one after another. There was no need, then, to refute those charges. Moreover, by all appearances the public acts of persecution were ceasing. Those private individuals who seemed to have lent themselves somewhat to the mischief were sorry for their part in it. In fact, the Prince de Conti thought the 'intellectuals' were only having a good joke on one of their own, to whom they were nevertheless really attached, though he was probably duped when he was made to think that. For others had been fooled by Voltaire the same way, and people who ought never to have been so easily inveigled. Thus the pious old De Luc, Rousseau's friend from the days of 1754 and a visitor to him at Montmorency, wrote him at last a long letter of sincerest affection to confess how very badly he

¹ Nos. 1537-8.

had been taken in, months before, by Voltaire, who had made up to him and listened politely to a correction of his poem on natural religion and promised, in effect, to make the change in the new edition—and it was all politeness and deception, De Luc found to his chagrin: 'The dangerous chameleon!' He now had no use for the fellow, and, addressing himself to his friend Rousseau, he naturally looked to him for aid against that corrupting influence in Geneva, but, alas, why had he in his *Profession* not limited his attack to the dogma of sanguinary intolerance, why did he have to sap the foundations of Christianity, with criticisms that were of general purport and not confined to Rome—a question Vernet was to press on him likewise—and why deny 'revelation'? He possessed, indeed, an 'extraordinary understanding' of politics which gladdened the heart of every Genevan; and likewise his courage to speak as he thought; but those doubts about religion, and the last chapter of the *Social Contract*, created a 'bad impression' among the citizens, however well disposed they might be otherwise. De Luc said that he had tried to explain such views as due to the fact that Rousseau had lived for so long in a country where there was no choice between being incredulous and superstitious. But would he not come forward now and speak in the same vein as he had once done in De Luc's presence on the occasion of a walk together at Montmorency some years before, when he had said in all simplicity that the Holy Scripture meant more to him than all the other books of the world? Maybe, De Luc added, with an author's pride, he would need to study a few others to help him understand further the great book, one of his own, for instance, or another by some English mathematician who 'demonstrated the truth of Christianity from the resurrection of Jesus Christ'. But none better than Rousseau could defend the divinity of the Christian religion, if he only had the aid of a 'heavenly benediction'. Thus De Luc appealed to him for a new piece of writing in their common cause against the impious Voltaire. Though the *Profession* had actually started as a development of his private letter refuting Voltaire, apparently the intention of the author needed to be made plainer for such as De Luc and the ministers of Geneva. And it seemed very necessary, too, in regard to the final chapter of the *Social Contract*, for so very intelligent and enthusiastic a follower as his friend Usteri of Zürich felt that the supposed Christians who could never form a Republic were described as 'fanatics', not veritable Christians. Indeed, his beloved disciple Roustan came all the way from Geneva with two like-minded citizens to spend a week with him and go over a 'refuta-

tion', and it was clear from the dissent expressed as to the meaning of his chapter on *Civil Religion* that it was not understood as he had meant it. Notwithstanding this misprision, Rousseau was well pleased with the young man's refutation, because it revealed a man with 'a love of liberty'.¹ It was pleasing, too, to find people at last reading his books, and seriously refuting them, not simply issuing orders for his imprisonment and the destruction of his works. Still, when persons so sympathetic as Roustau, De Luc, Usteri, and others whose spirit he respected, actually misunderstood him on this point, it behooved him to make another effort. This was one motive for taking up the pen himself and not waiting until Moultau, who saw eye to eye with him and might ably enough defend him, would do so. His friends generally wanted something to come from his own hand.²

The pride of the republican was another motive for taking up the pen. During the visit of the three Genevans, a letter came from Mme de Boufflers urging him to do something utterly against the grain for him, to accept favors of the King of Prussia in the form of a shelter and provisions for subsistence, in lieu of money. He would not be beholden to that monarch. She also disapproved of his letter to Montmollin as a step which helped his enemies, and she counselled him to do nothing at all until he became more tranquil. But he was then quite tranquil, and the advice seemed gratuitous. He was happy in conversation with his fellow-citizens, and cherishing the hope of a return to Geneva. He had so far been moderate in all his actions, consenting to give explanations through his pastor, and avoiding anything like a break with the ministers who wanted a retraction, for he had not expressed any refusal to retract, but, as he said to Pictet, was waiting until he could see clearly. This letter from Mme de Boufflers irritated him with its suggestions, especially its easy way of inviting him to accept alms in disguise from a prince whose conduct in the affairs of the world would be obnoxious to any republican. And his mind was further thrown back to its old attitudes by the news from his old friend de Conzié, of the death of Mme de Warens, the first person associated with his career away from his own country. Ancient sentiments were then aroused, amongst them those of independence and resentment at any dictating by so-called friends. They were further aggravated by another repercussion of the French domination in Europe. For Rey had sent word that Holland had not only stopped the sale of *Émile*, but, piqued

¹ Cf. A. J. Roustau, *Offrandes aux autels et à la patrie*.

² Nos. 1539, 1540, 1545.

over finding a work they had officially permitted condemned in France, they had actually disavowed their own permit to Neaulme the publisher, 'for their honor'. The *Social Contract*, with which alone Rey was personally concerned, was also prohibited, although most people in Holland thought very highly of it. This called out a characteristic retort from the citizen: 'because the "parlement" of Paris dares to insult a sovereign power, that sovereign power publicly recognises the jurisdiction of the "parlement" of Paris, and submits to its censorship'. 'My dear Rey, I am sincerely attached to you but I am still more so to my own honor: I have more pride than their High Powers and a more legitimate pride. I shall never consent to a collection of my writings published in Holland unless it is printed there with approbation, and the unjust affront done me is repaired by an authentic privilege and one as honorable as the preceding revocation is insulting.'¹

Thus aroused he burst out in indignation to Moulto, the same day as his letter to Rey, and showed how he felt about being called upon to make a public retraction. 'We are certainly far from understanding each other (Vernet and I). My God, how foolishly these ministers conduct themselves in this affair! The decree of the "parlement" of Paris has entirely turned their heads; they would have such a fine time always pushing the priests ahead of them and slinking aside themselves; but they would absolutely make common cause with them—let them do it then, they will put me very much at ease. . . . When people pretend to set themselves up as judges of Christianity, it is necessary to know it better than these gentlemen do, and I am astonished that they have not yet been instructed by some one to see that their tribunal is not so supreme but that a Christian can appeal over it. . . . However, I have not yet taken up the pen; I want to see even better still the consequence of all these things before doing so. . . . I shall not let anything appear, at least, without conferring with you.' This message was sent back to Geneva with Roustan and his companions.²

He wrote to De Luc later, with great calmness as well as affection. He patiently explained himself, and that it had been in truth precisely his intention in the *Profession* to combat the influence of Voltaire. The 'insoluble objections' had not prevented him from being 'a true Christian, sincerely attached to the reformed religion, not, perhaps, in the manner of the ministers, but in that of Jesus Christ. I doubt many things which are not susceptible of a demonstration that will satisfy

¹ Nos. 1523, 1546, 1551 from Conzié, No. 122, C.G., vol. i, p. 327, and viii, p. 176.

² No. 1552.

me, but these doubts applying to nothing essential to true religion do not disturb me at all, and convinced of the insufficiency of the human mind on certain matters, I submit my heart in default of my reason. I try to love God above all else and my neighbor as myself. There is the summary of the law, and on everything else I do not blame any one for not thinking as I do, but I find it very bad indeed that they blame me for not thinking as others do. . . . Although in this respect my conscience is at peace, I will not suffer that tyrannical self-love which wants to subject everything to our opinions, to trouble it; I do not wish to confer with any one, I don't want to read any more books, and I don't want to suffer any sermons except at church. I beg you, my dear friend, if you ever come to see me, to be prepared for that, for it is my final resolution.' He had, however, read DeLuc's own book and candidly declared it to be 'more solid than well-written'. And in bidding farewell he said: 'I love you with all my heart, I should be very happy to see you provided you do not come to sermonise me, for then we will not be long content with each other.' On receiving this message, old DeLuc set out on the route from Geneva to Môtiers, unwisely going by way of the mountains in the latter part of October, and he arrived seriously ill with a colic which alarmed his friend and required several days of nursing in bed. 'He's an excellent friend,' Moulton heard, 'a man full of sense, of rectitude and of virtue; he's the most honest and most tiresome of friends. . . . He would very much like to bring me together with your gentlemen, and I too would like it from the bottom of my heart, but I see clearly that those people there, ill-intentioned as they are, would want to put me under the ferrule, and if they do not have entirely the face to demand retractions, for fear that I would send them walking, they would want explanations to make a public show, and that is assuredly what I will never do, except so far as it might be in accord with my principles, for certainly they will never make me say what I do not think. Moreover, isn't it amusing that it should be I who must pay the cost of the reparation for the affronts I have received? They begin by burning my book, and then they demand explanations afterwards. In a word, these gentlemen, whom I took to be reasonable, are hypocrites like the others, and like them they would maintain by force a doctrine they do not believe. I foresee that sooner or later it will be necessary to break, so there is no sense in renewing ties. When I see you we shall discuss all that thoroughly.'¹

However, he charged De Luc to do all he could in the matter

¹ Nos. 1554, 1564.

of a *rapprochement*, although he himself was too much aroused over the old question of liberty or force to be long silent. But he was not going to address his piece to the ministers of Geneva directly, heeding Moultau's advice on no account to 'attack' them, since it would only 'make the Voltaireans dance with glee'. There had just come to hand a copy of a new document against him, an *Order* from the Archbishop of Paris, Francis Beaumont. This new attack on *Émile* furnished him with the occasion for writing the reply in which he could say all he wanted, to the ministers and all others.¹

In the midst of his tentatives at writing this piece he sent off a long letter about the situation to Mme de Boufflers, and explained that his letter to Montmollin had been nothing out of the way, but only a request that he be permitted to *continue* professing his own religion at Môtiers as he had done for years past in France itself. If he had not communicated with the church in that season it might have been trumped up against him that he was a 'deserter of his religion', which, according to the law of Geneva, would have been a sufficient pretext for depriving him of his citizenship. Apparently the wiles of those against him knew no limits. He was now held up as a hypocrite. The choice was between being either an 'impious' fellow or a 'hypocrite'. And that dilemma was one of the things weighing on his mind, one of the themes of his new piece of writing.²

It was at this time he answered the offer of Frederick of Prussia to house and provision him in lieu of giving him money. 'Sire: You are my protector and my benefactor, and I have a heart made for gratitude; I want to acquit myself with you, if I can.

'You want to give me bread: is there none of your subjects who lacks it?

'Take away from before my eyes that sword that flashes and wounds me. It has only too well rendered its service, and the sceptre is abandoned. The career of kings of your stuff is great, and you are still far from your term. However, time is pressing, and there is not a moment left for you to lose in order to arrive there. Sound your own heart well, Oh Frederick. Can you resolve to die without having been the greatest of men?

'Could I ever be permitted to see Frederick the Just and Feared cover his states at last with a happy people whose father he would be, then J.-J. Rousseau the enemy of kings would go to die of joy at the foot of his throne.'

And after that the formal salutation which was exceedingly rare in Rousseau's correspondence.³ The republican was

¹ Nos. 1541, 1557.

² No. 1574.

³ No. 1575.

thoroughly aroused now, and daring to read his lesson of justice and peace to kings.

To Moultou he was silent about the project forming in his thought. No doubt he was still not absolutely resolved to indulge in any public statement from Môtiers where he might excite the 'Neuchâtel heads' whom Frederick wanted so peaceful. Besides, it would be much better if his defense were to come from some other's hand, for he realised that 'one never knows rightly how to speak of oneself'. And meantime De Luc and Moultou decided to base their campaign for securing the consent of the government to his return on the original letter to Montmollin, and they both besought him to get permission of his pastor for the use of the letter which was a private communication. This he flatly declined to do, because he had no wish to compromise Montmollin any further in this matter by injecting him into a public case at Geneva. Probably, too, he was not so anxious to have this letter used because the criticisms of Mme de Boufflers and Vernet revealed a certain quality in it that was not true to himself. And this fact constituted a further incentive to the composing of some new justification. However, the insistence of his Genevan friends that by such a letter as that they might succeed, led him to yield so far at least as to forward their request to Montmollin without any comment save to ask that he be informed of the decision. He intended, if Montmollin gave his consent to the request, to send along some explanations to the ministers, in an effort to satisfy Vernet who, as Moultou said, 'both loved and feared' him. Unhappily Montmollin was thrown in great perplexity at this critical moment. For he had been taken in tutelage, as it were, by his elder, Sarasin of Geneva, to whom he had sent the copy of the letter in the first place, and Sarasin feared that the letter was wanted by Rousseau's friends for publication in order to start a sedition. Consequently the pastor at Môtiers preferred to have them deal with Sarasin, saying that he authorised him to show the letter to the necessary parties who ought to see it for the government, or else to give De Luc and Moultou copies of it on condition that it be not published. These precautions Rousseau respected, but he saw the negotiations taking time, and everything for himself at stake—vindication at Geneva, which for all his pride, he wanted very dearly. Then a disappointing message came from Moultou who was now in despair because he had compromised himself so badly with the Company of Pastors that he could no longer be of any service in that quarter. In dejection, too, over his failure to get results there, he felt hopeless about the success of his defense and suggested it would be necessary for the defendant

himself to revise the piece very thoroughly. Now if Rousseau were going to do all that he might just as well write the whole thing himself. And so a new plan occurred to him, to address another letter to Montmollin which could serve in lieu of the original one. He told De Luc the 'sketch' of it was already made (that is, the sketch of what he had been designing for Beaumont at Paris) and that it had the same meaning as the other letter, but only the style was changed, being less 'suppliant' and therefore 'more like himself'. But when he was more like himself he always showed pride, independence and even defiance. And this attitude was now reinforced in him by a vigorous letter from that honest, old exile Lenieps, with whom he had often celebrated 'escalade': 'The ministers will not be content with what you say of Jesus Christ, and will reply that you attack the received opinion, without troubling whether that opinion be true or not, and whether the people ought to be enlightened or deceived. What are they doing in such things? They are preaching for their own interest, and interest dominates men, especially at a time when luxury has increased their wants without any augmentation of their pay.' Lenieps was a banker, not too fond of the clergy. In any case, Rousseau was now hoping only to win over the body of magistrates. Could De Luc use a new letter to Montmollin for this purpose?¹

De Luc thought their own plan could go through without this letter. For the political situation was changing. When the regular vote was taken as to whether the Procurator-General, Tronchin, should be continued in office, 'four hundred citizens and bourgeois', not far short of a majority, voted against him because of his 'violations of the laws' in regard to Rousseau. De Luc had won over four syndics, and planned to use for his case the 'explanations' Montmollin had given in a letter to D'Ivernois, a friend of theirs at Geneva, for admitting Rousseau to communion, so that it was not necessary to apply to Sarasin for any permission. And now, De Luc cheerfully wrote, he need not write anything more, but only come straight to Geneva and present himself to the first syndic and tell him whatever he thought suitable and then communicate with the church at Christmas-time—with that he would be rehabilitated in his own country. This letter was written the 23rd of November, and Rousseau had a vision of himself arriving in physical distress at Geneva, as De Luc himself had arrived at Môtiers through undertaking a journey in the unfavorable season. He shied away from the very idea, and besides, it was too fanciful, too sanguine. What was he to say to the chief of the government?

¹ Nos. 1583, 1585, 1589, 1591-2-3, 1595, 1597, 1604, 1606.

Was he to humble himself in person, when he had done no wrong? Thus his pride and physical weakness and sense of the futility of the whole project made him hopeless of success by anything others might undertake for him. He returned, then, to his own last thought of writing another letter to Montmollin in the hope of its mending matters somehow in that quarter, amongst the ministers. He did not write this in the proud spirit he had predicted to De Luc. It was a simple appeal against the unreason of the double charge against him in the eyes of some of the pastors, who had felt at first he was ‘impious’ and then, when he professed his sincere belief in God, called him a ‘hypocrite’. People acted as if they ‘did not imagine any one could sincerely believe in God’. ‘You see that however I conduct myself, it is impossible for me to escape one of these two imputations. But you see also that if both of them are equally devoid of proof, that of hypocrisy is, however, the most inept, for a little hypocrisy would have saved me much misfortune, and my good faith costs me dearly enough, it seems to me, so that it ought to be above suspicion.’ There had been no intention on his part to throw ridicule on Christianity. What he said reflected on the Church of Rome. But why on earth did those of the reformed faith make common cause with Rome? ‘Do they actually want, then, to become more and more like them in thought as they already are in their intolerance, contrary to the principles of their own communion?’ To be sure he had raised objections to certain articles of faith. ‘However, I do not think that it is necessary to suppress the objections one cannot resolve, for that surreptitious manœuvre has an air of bad faith about it that revolts me, and makes me fear that at bottom there are very few believers. All human knowledge has its obscurities, its difficulties, its objections that the human mind with its great limitations cannot solve. . . . The objections do not prevent a demonstrated truth from being demonstrated, and one must hold fast to what one really knows and not want to know everything even in the matter of religion. With all that, we will serve God with no less wholeheartedness; we will be no less true believers; and we will be the more humane, more kindly, more tolerant of those who do not think as we do on every count. Considered in that sense the *Profession of Faith of the Vicar* can be said to have its utility even in that which has been most disapproved. . . . I only want, sir, to renew to you the declaration of my firm and sincere resolve, wherever I am, to live and to die in the communion of the reformed Christian Church. . . .’ With that letter Rousseau did all that any human being in his place could be expected to do: he made asseveration of belief and a

defense of his having written out his objections, all without truculence or pride, but with a genuine will for peace and unison.¹

This letter prompted pastor Montmollin to play his part in the matter. He patiently composed a long circumstantial account of the whole affair and sent it to D'Ivernois, Rousseau's friend, instead of to his mentor Sarasin, and he authorised the showing of it to any one, on condition simply that no copy nor printing of it was allowed.²

But Rousseau had no expectation that anything would come of this, and, on the contrary, he had a prophetic insight into the difficulties which it would raise for Montmollin himself. As he wrote De Luc: 'I don't see why they would demand an accounting from him as to why he has not excommunicated me.' That they would, however, he felt certain, divining clearly the theological animus that was now aroused in Geneva. It was a great relief to him to receive marks of neighborly interest from old Keith, 'a man of stuff', who cheered him up with a bottle of wine: 'No, my lord, I am neither in good health nor content; but when I receive some mark of kindness and remembrance from you, I am affected, I forget my troubles; besides I have a heart that is crushed, and I draw less courage from my philosophy than from your wine of Spain. . . . Everything displeases me, everything frustrates me, everything bothers me. I have no more confidence and liberty except with you.' And he wondered if Keith still cherished his 'castle in Spain', and that the two of them might return to Scotland on his land and have David Hume with them. Geneva was simply out of the question now for the rest of his life.³

Keith was somewhat taken aback at finding his heart so set on that idea. 'I have only given my project as a real "castle in Spain".' He could not provide for him beyond the term of his own life because his land was entailed. Their 'republic' would be totally upset by his own death. 'If the land were really mine, I should make a Christian hermitage on the right, a Mohammedan on the left, and David Hume would be lodged between the two.' So he jollied his downcast friend at Môtiers, adding, more seriously, that there would be a serious question about living in Scotland because of the climate, and also he himself could hardly hope to be released by the King of Prussia.⁴ No hope there, then, for the man wearied of all the controversy and wanting some kind of home and country to live in without more trouble.

And then Rousseau made a decision. He communicated with

¹ Nos. 1601, 1606-7, 1609.

³ Nos. 1609, 1611.

² No. 1610.

⁴ No. 1615.

Rey, on December 1, 1762, announcing that he would have a new piece of writing ready for him at the latest by six weeks. He was at last resolved to speak out for himself, and to fight.¹

All during the month of December he worked, in great physical suffering from his chronic ailment, and obviously so badly off that Keith talked to him about looking out for Thérèse in case of his death.² He was in the same state as that winter of 1758 when he 'saved' his life by writing the *Letter to D'Alembert*. This time it was another *Letter*, addressed likewise to one in Paris, the Archbishop.

Meantime, nothing at all was happening at Geneva from his last letter to Montmollin: 'I detach myself more and more every day from Geneva.' On hearing from Moulton that he himself was at daggers' ends with the body of the clergy, he asked: Why did he not quit their body before he was thrown out? What a relief it was to think of Keith: 'there's a man.' Keith was going to pay a visit to Geneva, and Moulton was advised to cut out all compliments with him and deal with him in a way differently from that needed for humoring the clergy. From Paris came another attack on himself, from the Sorbonne; but there also came deeply affectionate greetings from his old neighbor, Mme de Verdelin, who reported on Voltaire's discredit in the city. Word also came from Lenieps, written on Christmas Day, when he felt more than ever the loss of his daughter with whose family he had lived for years, and he turned for consolation on that day to this friend with whom he had always been wont to celebrate Geneva's day of deliverance. Such messages heartened Rousseau and doubtless gave him strength to go on with his defense. And on January 1, 1763, the *Letter to Beaumont* went forth to Holland, to be printed as soon as possible.³

Addressed to the Archbishop of Paris, this *Letter* was meant for all the world. It was for the governments of France and of Geneva, and for the special interests behind them, and his enemies. It answered the calumny of the court charge, and the wicked accusations of impiety and hypocrisy alike. It was for his friends, too, who had misunderstood him on certain points—his 'explanations' were there. And for the world generally it was to be an account of the true purposes of all his writings for the ten years of his literary career, and at the same time a narrative of the events of the past seven months since the publication of his two treatises which had been so much maligned. The various letters written to his friends during those months of patience under attack served as studies for his defense, and all the sentiments expressed in them from time to time had their

¹ No. 1616.² No. 1624.³ Nos. 1624, 1632, 1635, 1648.

cumulative voicing in it—his sense of being in the right and according to law, and of the injustice and intolerance in high quarters, and with these sentiments came his pride, exasperation, disgust, and defiance as he had felt them, but not publicly expressed them, during that period.

'A catholic prelate lances an order against a protestant author; he mounts his tribunal in order to examine, as judge, the private doctrine of a heretic, and although he damns indiscriminately whoever is not of his Church, without permitting the accused to err in his own way, he prescribes to him by what route he ought to go to hell. Immediately the rest of his clergy rush on, press forward, and rage about an enemy they believe crushed to earth. Little and great, they are all in it. . . . How I hate the discouraging doctrine of our harsh theologians. . . . When unjust preachers, arrogating to themselves rights they do not have, would like to make themselves arbiters of my faith, and come to me saying arrogantly: "Retract, disguise yourself, explain these things, disavow those," their superiorities don't impose on me. They will not make me lie in order to be orthodox, nor say, to please them, what I do not think. . . . For so long as I am what I am and think as I think, I shall speak as I speak; very different, I admit from your Christians in effigy, always ready to believe what they must believe, or to say what they should say, for their interest or their peace, and always sure enough Christians, provided one does not burn their books, and they are not arrested. They live as people persuaded not only that such and such articles must be professed but also that such things suffice for going to paradise; and I, on the contrary, think that the essential of religion consists in practice, that it is not merely necessary to be a good man, merciful, human, charitable, but that whoever is truly such believes enough to be saved, and further, that it costs much less to put oneself among the number of the elect by opinions than by virtues. . . . Why should I be a hypocrite, and what could I gain by being one? I have attacked all the private interests, I have stirred up against me all the parties, I have done nothing but sustain the cause of God and humanity. . . . In fine, if I had openly declared myself for atheism, they would at first have howled me down a little but they would soon have left me in peace like all the others: the people of the Lord would not have assumed an inspection over me. . . . the saints in Israel would never have written me anonymous letters, and their charity would never have exhaled itself in devout insults; they would never have taken the pains to assure me humbly I was a rascal, an execrable monster . . . and some good folks, for their part regarding me then as one reproved,

would not have tormented themselves, nor me, to bring me back to the path of righteousness; they would not have pulled me in all directions, nor stifled me with the weight of their sermons and forced me to bless their zeal whilst cursing their impotency and feeling with gratitude that they are called to make me die of ennui. Sir, if I am a hypocrite, I am a fool. . . . If I am a hypocrite, I am stupid . . . but if it ever comes to pass that I attain to high honors and fortune, by whatever route I get there, *then I shall* be a hypocrite, that's certain. . . . When one loses sight of the duties of men in order to turn one's attention wholly to the opinions of priests and their frivolous disputes, one no longer asks of a Christian whether he fears God, but whether he is orthodox. They make him sign some formulas on the most futile questions and often those the most unintelligible, and when he has signed, all goes well—they don't trouble to inform themselves further. Provided he does not go and get himself hanged, he can live otherwise as he pleases, for his morals have nothing to do with the matter, the doctrine being made sure. When religion is at that stage, what earthly good is it to society? What good is it to men? . . . The really impious people are those who arrogate to themselves the right to exercise the power of God on this earth, and want to open and close the gate of Heaven at their will. . . . Go on, discourse at your ease you other men vested in your dignities! Recognising no right save your own, nor any laws except those you impose yourselves, so far from making it your duty to be just, you do not even believe yourselves obliged to be human.'

There the intolerants and orthodox were exposed. And alongside the prelate of Paris and his priests there were represented the notables of Geneva, its ministers, its citizens, its tolerated infidels, its procurators. Friends and half-friends, like De Luc and Vernet, stood out in their different roles in the drama, only men such as Moulou and Roustan not appearing, because he loved them as true and honest men and had no wish to compromise them in any way by his argument. For his *Letter* was no retraction in any sense whatever. If anything, it emphasised the doubts and difficulties as to religious faith, in so far as it involved belief in miracles, revelation, and Creation. No compliance there! And the end was written in the superb tone of Socrates in the *Apology*, when called upon to name his own sentence: 'If there did really exist in Europe a single enlightened government, a government whose views were truly useful and sound, it would have rendered public honors to the author of *Émile*, and it would have erected statues to him.'¹

¹ *Lettre à M. de Beaumont*, H., vol. iii, pp. 58 ff.

The pride in the heart of the citizen yielded soon to a sense of unwisdom in having embarked thus upon his vindication. He began to have misgivings about the *Letter to Beaumont* already in the hands of his publisher and he expressed the thought, time and again, that one never does right to wax warm over injustices done to oneself. This made him put down the momentary temptation to write another defense in reply to a new attack from the Sorbonne. And besides, the writing of that last piece had kindled his imagination to larger projects than a mere reviewing of his life and work for the public. His mind was captivated with the idea of a *History of the Government of Geneva*. He opened his heart on this matter to the good man De Luc, staunch defender of the bourgeoisie and of his own cause. And, his fancy playing with this new topic, he took occasion, in writing to Marshal de Luxembourg, to give an extended descriptive account of the Swiss country, the mountains, the streams, the people and their customs, and other details of the land in which he then lived. His pen was taking him to a new task, and it seemed so fine a thing that what he had just done in the *Letter to Beaumont* sank lower in his esteem, so far, indeed, as to impel him to ask Rey that it be not published, unless the actual printing had begun. But Rey had already sent it to the press, although he too had previously written to say that the *Letter* would certainly make more enemies for him, and great trouble.¹

In the meantime those who were working on his behalf in Geneva adhered to their plan of having him make his appearance before the authorities. Such an act of humbling himself he had already refused. He would do nothing which had the flavour of an apology or compliance. Indeed, he could now do nothing else, for his *Letter* was soon to appear exhibiting his own refusal to submit. He had to act consistently with that forthcoming declaration, and, incidentally, this was another reason for regretting it, for he had to appear either obstinate or hypocritical. He chose to suffer the imputation of being obstinate. Moulton pleaded with him to win justice for himself by gentleness, and to render to his country more than was due it. De Luc pressed home this lesson of duty, a duty to his friends as well as his country, and truly his own good. Would he not be willing to say he was sorry he had written things *liable* to misinterpretation? No, the injured citizen would not say he was sorry for anything. He would write again exactly what had been written in the condemned books—it was, of course, a *fait accompli*. All this lecturing him about duty made him angry, so much so that his nearby friend, Keith, had to urge him to restrain himself and not

¹ C.G., vol. viii, Nos. 1652-3; vol. ix, nos. 1661; 1664; 1673-4; 1681.

rebuff the honest bourgeois who were truly his friends. This friendly counsel from one whom he deeply respected calmed him down. Yet he wrote to De Luc vigorously, giving a decisive refusal once and for all, ever to put himself in the position of seeming an offender. It was up to those who gave the offense in the first place to take the step toward justice. His attitude here was exactly the same proud attitude exhibited in the quarrel with Diderot years before: let the aggressor take the step first toward reconciliation. And what was all that talk about duty to the country, about doing something on behalf of the laws and for the good of all? If such an action of reconciliation were for the good of all, why were most of those who would benefit by it simply standing there as idle spectators whilst he suffered all the obloquy? Why was it all up to him, the injured party, if all the others were to derive good from it? Was there nothing they themselves could undertake in defense of their own laws? The retorts were quite proper; and they were taken to heart by De Luc and certain citizens, with consequences in later action that was entirely in order but too late to do any good. Meantime, in his moments of renewed indignation, the moralist in his mountains at Môtiers felt a strong temptation coming over him to read a good sound lesson directly to the people in high place at Geneva.¹

But he was loath, at the same time, to contemplate getting any deeper into the imbroglio. He wanted to be free of all this trouble with Geneva, free from the ties that kept him from enjoying a needed repose, and made him write letter after letter and always defending himself, all on account of a wrong inflicted on him, and nothing done by himself. The thought of salvation came, the thought of cutting himself entirely off from it all, by abdicating his title as citizen.²

Besides he was very ill, so ill as to proceed with the making of a Will, in order to provide for Thérèse. He was in a state of physical suffering and weakness, and sinking far in spirits as well as in body, so that no hope shone through the darkness. When De Luc and Moulton joyfully—and as it happened, prematurely—pronounced the *Letter to Beaumont* a godsend to them all, a work by which they hoped to do wonders for him, he refused to believe them, presaging ill, and remembering what Lenieps had said about the unforgiving, intolerant theologians, and what Rey, too, had predicted—more enemies than ever from that *Letter*. No, he refused to be optimistic. And in order to be prepared, and to assure himself that his Will would be honored under some jurisdiction, and his companion vouchsafed

¹ Nos. 1693-4, 1696, 1701-2, 1705, 1707, 1729.

² Nos. 1701-2, 1734.

protection, he accepted naturalisation papers from the hands of Keith as governor of the State of Neuchâtel.¹

Despairing though he was, he could not help hoping, somehow or other, to be received back into his own country and among his friends. Indeed the need of a bosom friend at hand was very great. His protector, Keith, was going away for a time to Berlin. He wished for Moulton, above all, to be close at this critical moment in his life, and yearned for the long-promised visit; but in vain. He then asked him for the name and address of the first syndic in Geneva, to whom he would have to send notice of change of citizenship. Moulton's reply was an urgent and affectionate letter not to be precipitate, but to await the effect of the *Letter* among the citizens who were in the majority for him. He followed this with another message to say that Vernet, the leader of the clergy, was really in his favor and that everybody was saying: Rousseau can return to Geneva. Hope revived for a moment, an almost fatuous hope and dream, of being received at last in full title as a citizen, with all the stigma of the condemnation of his work wiped away. But the dream was dashed by reflections upon a letter from the pedestrian De Luc which talked still of corrections, and what he ought to do on this happy occasion of re-entering Geneva. Well, he would forgive injuries, but not make any advances! Despite Moulton's next letter, therefore, a letter saying: 'Come, you will finish all', and telling that the Council had permitted the sale of his *Letter to Beaumont* in Geneva, he had made his decision. It was a resolve, intimated in the *Letter*, of putting an end to all this troublesome business by renouncing his citizenship, thus taking himself beyond the authority and interest of the Genevans and winning the repose he so desperately needed for life's sake. The idea was now an imperative, and he acted at once, making a formal abdication to the first Syndic of the State. And farther, to stop at once all the correspondence about the case, he sent copies of the letter to his friends there. And then, too late, Moulton came rushing to his master solitary in his mountains at Môtiers.²

Alas, there was no ending the affair thus. By the contrariety of human affairs this letter of renunciation, intended to set him free, only involved him the deeper in trouble and ties with Geneva. The notion of such a drastic step had first been Moulton's own suggestion in a moment of high excitement ten months before, on the occasion when the *Social Contract* and *Émile* were burned by public order. The idea had afterwards been dis-

¹ Nos. 1753, 1757, 1777.

² Nos. 1776, 1779, 1787, 1796, 1798-9, 1803, 1807-8, 1814.

cussed with Marcet de Mézières, the friend of Colonel Pictet, as an act likely to be of some real service to the cause of justice in Geneva. The action itself also fitted in peculiarly with Rousseau's own conceptions that the individual really makes a social contract with the whole state when he lives as a citizen thereof, and it was consistent with such views that a citizen who is debarred from honorable residence in the State may make a withdrawal of citizenship from his side. It had thus gained the status in his mind of being a perfectly natural thing to do, though the suggestion had originally come from others. But now that the deed was done, it seemed that all in Geneva judged him to be wrong. He received letters from his friends admiring his courage and 'infinitely touched', but saying they would *never* have advised such a step. Even Lenieps could not understand why it was necessary. De Luc thought he could have done better 'for the common good'. Behold, then, the making of more explanations, and more argument, and especially with one stalwart citizen, Marc Chappuis, who took him vigorously to task, and to whom he felt it necessary to state the principles of the 'contract' of the citizen with the State. The State or the body of the bourgeoisie had not defended him against his debarment from the city. They had not troubled to uphold their own laws. Yet they had all the while a perfectly legal procedure which they could have followed in regard to a supposed violation of their laws; but they had not made their 'representations' as they were entitled to do. Why had they not resorted to that right? Instead, they expected him to come and make apologies because their governing body had done him wrong. He wrote in the same vein to De Luc, that they need not expect any more letters, visits, explanations, or anything of the sort from him. He was done with all their inspection of his affairs and opinions. It was up to the citizens of Geneva now, if they really wanted him back, to take a positive action and secure a formal restitution of his citizenship to him. This was a challenge, if not an open invitation, to the bourgeois to make 'representations', in accordance with the constitution of Geneva, against the infraction of their laws. And those who were hostile to him construed it as a deliberate attempt to stir up sedition in the State. These letters thus created a lively ferment, and party feelings.¹

As a matter of fact, Rousseau had no intention of starting any such action with the hope of returning to Geneva. He was communicating with Keith over their mutual 'castle in Spain', of going to Scotland together where they would join David

¹ Nos. 1813-14-15, 1820-1, 1822, 1830-1.

Hume. This visit to a land of freedom had been insistently recommended to him by friends in Paris as well as by the old Earl Marshal himself. There had been some notion of his proceeding by way of Geneva and visiting Moulton and his few real friends, who were urging him to do so and to give them a chance to show him their loyalty, but that was promptly given up when they realised his presence in the city might occasion an uproar and rend the State with dissension. It was not his ambition to play a part in such proceedings. His one desire was rest and quiet; and no more of these Genevans to judge him.¹

But some Genevans of the old school were in a fighting mood. Lenieps, in Paris, really disapproved of the abdication of citizenship, chiefly because it meant giving up the fight—he had been a warrior in the cause of the *Bourgeoisie* before his exile—he was now too far away from his companion of former days to realise how great was his need of repose at the moment. Lenieps reported that a spirit of resistance to his persecution was alive in all quarters and that Diderot in particular was everywhere defending his writings, and D'Alembert who had lent himself, perhaps, to Voltaire's schemes, acted like one crest-fallen at the part he had played, and as for 'the Saxon' (Grimm), he seemed like one 'who had been reprov'd'. In Geneva, De Luc gathered with various others to make the formal 'representations' to the Council, complaining of the violation of the law in the case of one J.-J. Rousseau, a citizen. This action alarmed the younger men who had never had to fight, as their elders had, for the cause of civil liberty. Thus Moulton and De Luc fell out with each other. And their quarrel was taken to Rousseau, who had the chagrin of seeing himself a bone of contention not only amongst the citizens but also within the very circle of his friends. Moulton and Roustan were so fearful of the disturbance of the public peace and the charge of his having started a sedition that they begged him to prove he was not 'the instigator' of the representations and the cause of all such trouble in his country, and willing to profit himself at the cost of its peace. The first set of representations had been simply rebuffed by the Council, and the determined bourgeois were pressing forward with a second set. Would not Rousseau disavow these representations, and thus save the State? So they appealed to his patriotism. And he really wanted to stop the matter from going farther, and above all, to prove his own disinterestedness. He acted promptly and decisively: he renounced, once and for all, the right of citizenship, even if it were restored, and the hope of ever setting foot again, in any capacity what-

¹ Nos. 1825, 1833-4, 1838-9, 1843.

soever, in Geneva. The citizens might do what they would with their representations, he was not going to derive any personal benefit therefrom—it was to be their affair entirely; their cause was to be henceforth purely that of the laws and civil liberty.

But now the heroic and embattled De Luc was upset by this message, and very indignant with the friends who had prevailed on him to send it, for it had the effect of weakening the forces of the 'representants' at a critical moment, of drawing off some who would heed his words—it thus threatened the success of the cause as one of law and civil liberty, the very thing Rousseau had intended to aid. Why had he not followed the advice of people of riper experience? De Luc then broke absolutely with both Moultau and Roustan. And Rousseau came to realise that he now owed something to that cause, and to those older friends who had been courageous enough to start the representations. His duty to them became the more fixed in his conscience because De Luc went on struggling against the greater odds created by his own deed, De Luc, heroic, resolute, sure of victory without internal dissension endangering the State, and interested in liberty as well as peace. Something ought to be done for this body of citizens. But he felt so incompetent, and so ill, that the thought of undertaking anything new was too much for him. He even contemplated suicide as the only way out of a trouble that was beyond his power to check, and he made provision for Thérèse in that event. If he lived any longer he would have great amends to make to the good bourgeois of Geneva.¹

He lived on. And courage came from the fact that those men of old Geneva looked to him still to do something by way of remedy for their affairs. De Luc wanted their case as 'representants' defending the laws made clear. Lenieps wrote from Paris that now was the chance to revive the authority of the General Assembly of the people, the institution which had fallen into abeyance; he called on him to employ his pen on behalf 'of the right of periodic assembly', and sent him information about the past history of Geneva. Something might be done on a large scale for that cause. It was better by far than attacking the opposition party, as it appears Moultau wanted,—for example, to attack Vernes's *Letters on the Christianity of Mr. J.-J. Rousseau*, which had just appeared. For it was rumored that Rousseau had some very good evidence against the now orthodox Vernes, an actual letter where Vernes had once praised the morality of Helvétius's materialism at a time when Rousseau himself had written notes in refutation of it. The existence of

¹ Nos. 1836, 1847, 1850, 1860, 1862, 1877-8-9.

this tell-tale letter had worried Vernes's friends, especially Dr. Tronchin, who did not want any weakness in their armor. But Rousseau was averse to discussing Helvétius, for the reason he had given before, that it might draw down the powers of persecution upon the man. And Vernes had so won his heart at one time earlier that he could not now think of anything but his 'disappointment', certainly not vengeance, not at this time when he wanted to end his days in possession of life's sole boon, 'peace of soul'. If anything were to be done, it would be the work which now seemed imperative, something from his pen to unite his friends who were so badly divided, and to aid the cause of the citizens against those in authority who had violated their laws.¹

De Luc submitted to him for his judgment the plan of a second representation. He criticised it, and urged that they wait until they were sure of every next step in case the Council rejected their plea. He told, too, how he would write if he were doing it. His tactics would be Socratic, to make the opposition draw the terrible consequences of their own policy, to have them state it in their own words and then convict them thereby.²

Just at the moment, when the bourgeois were about to take their second action, a brochure appeared in Geneva, *Letters Written from the Country*, a defense of the policy of the Council, known to be the work of the Procurator-General himself, Tronchin. The 'representants' went ahead notwithstanding.³ But De Luc summoned him to write a reply to those *Letters* and promised him all the necessary facts and explanations; here was the time, he wrote, for the superior mind of Rousseau to come into play, to dispatch the sophisms of that pamphlet and uphold the republican principles; this was, indeed, the occasion to employ his genius. And so his own cherished project of writing something useful to his country to vindicate himself as a true citizen was now exactly relevant to the issue right at hand. He felt he was destined to achieve something, and on October 1st, 1763, he intimated to Rey that by the following spring he might have something new for him to print. But he pledged him to absolute secrecy. And in responding to De Luc, to accept the enterprise, he enjoined the same silence about it upon him and asked to be supplied with all the documents pertaining to the History of the Government of Geneva, so necessary for an investigation of the present case concerning the right of the citizens to make representations to their governing Council. He said nothing even to Lenieps about the project, although Lenieps had quite independently made the same suggestion as De Luc, that he

¹ Nos. 1800, 1879, 1881, 1887, 1902.

² Nos. 1919, 1922.

³ No. 1926.

should refute those *Letters* written by Tronchin, that his pen alone could give the right form to the argument of those who asserted the right of the General Assembly to ultimate authority in the Republic, and that the 'style of fire' unique to him was here needed for a great work. And Lenieps, too, contributed, in the course of the following months, from his store of knowledge and experience in the affairs of Geneva, sending him extensive memoirs on incidents in its history and the things that had gone on behind the scenes on those occasions. So during the season when Rousseau was shut in by the coming of cold and snow upon the mountains of Môtiers, a season like that when he first wrote on behalf of Geneva, the *Letter to D'Alembert*, he busied himself thus, and probably 'saved' his life once again—composing his *Letters Written from the Mountain*.¹

Despite the troubles and illness of this period things were auspicious for inspiration. It was a time when some friends came in good stead. Indeed it was a happy circumstance of fate that at this moment many showed themselves, and rallied around him, not in matters politic, but in a more personal way. He had had too much of the fracas at Geneva and of the Genevans. When he started writing, he warned De Luc that he did not believe it wise or necessary for them to engage in correspondence, to which De Luc agreed. His mind now being made up about what he intended to do, he was disinclined to open his thought to Moulton who had disapproved of the vigorous activities of De Luc and his associates and might argue with him about the project; and Moulton, finding himself out of his confidence, complained a little at first about what he had suffered in the way of ostracism for his cause, and then on being told rather coolly that he was not expected to sacrifice himself, he withdrew, feeling some hurt, and indignation, too, because De Luc had apparently taken his place in the esteem of Rousseau—though later, when the *Letters* were out, and he saw what his master had been doing in his silence, he returned loyally to his side.² But Rousseau had an absolute need of getting away from all the associations of the recent turmoil, so as to attain a disinterested view of the matter he was treating. He might never have succeeded in doing it had not old friends, and certain new ones, made known to him their interest, their admiration, their respect, and withal, their very deep and genuine affection.

From Edinburgh came the letters of his most recent friend and protector, Earl Marshal Keith, who was preparing their 'colony' with Hume. Rousseau could not think of going under

¹ Nos. 1930, 1944-5, 1953, 1973, 2042-3.

² Nos. 1917, 1934, 1938, 1953.

the circumstances, and it turned out 'the good David' could not either, since he went to Paris with the English Ambassador; but it was encouraging to hear, from time to time during the coming months, of his protector's continued interest in their 'castle in Spain'.¹

Most grateful were the messages, too, of his old associates, and particularly those who had families and trials of their own, their hopes and fears and problems to talk over with him. Thus his neighbor of the days at Montmorency, Mme de Verdelin, who had taken serious counsel of him regarding her conjugal duties and the raising of her young daughters, now wrote him of things familiar, his cat and the garden he had left and the flowers and trees.² And Mme Latour de Franqueville who had begun writing him anonymously as 'Julie' became 'Marianne' to him and called him 'Jean-Jacques', in letters most intelligent, entertaining, full of life, letters encouraging him in his difficulties yet often daring his temper over her demands upon his time with a brave recklessness because she realised his heart was not so affected as her own—though he was often made impatient, and even ready to stop corresponding, he had to confess, 'no one writes better letters than you', and he would not have dispensed with them for the world.³ The words of some other recent friends were grateful to the exile at Môtiers. There was the admirable and masterly Julie Bondeli in Zürich who had routed the critics of the *Julie* and was capable of more such service, and Leonard Usteri who puzzled and puzzled over the apparent inconsistency of the last chapter of the *Social Contract* and whom Rousseau patiently enlightened, letter after letter, willing to go to any amount of trouble to deal with an honest difficulty. And Usteri introduced an obscure minister, Weguelin, who distinguished himself by being the first apologist of Rousseau in print, with some dialogues, *J.-J. Rousseau et Jacob Vernes*; he came for a visit which was most gratifying to both of them. And from near Lausanne a new disciple appeared, the Prince of Wurtemberg who wrote for advice on the rearing of an infant daughter and who received not only a considerable *Memoir* but also many sprightly and affectionate letters from his 'dear master'.⁴

And even France had her offerings of tribute. The Abbé de la Porte who was charged with Duchesne's edition of his

¹ Nos. 1899, 1904, 1913, 2012, 2030, 2045-8.

² *C.G.*, vol. ix, Nos. 1684, 1723, 1748, 1756, 1768; *C.G.*, vol. x, 1854, 1907-8, 1955, 1971, 1989, 1998, 2009, 2017.

³ *C.G.* vol. ix, Nos. 1773, vol. x, 1914, 1923, 1931, 1952, 1957, 1988, 2010, 2015-16, 2031, 2037, 2049.

⁴ *C.G.*, vol. ix, 1774, 1795, 1846; *C.G.*, vol. x, 1853, 1869, 1886, 1912, 1918, 1932-3, 1943, 1946, 1948, 1961, 1968, 2003, 2008, 2022, 2040.

works—an unauthorised edition—grasped so well the purport of the writings that he won the pleased admiration of the unwilling author who thenceforth sought to help him all he could. From Paris, too, came the letters of Lenieps, always personal and always invigorating, who told him, also, that Diderot was standing up for him against all-comers, which recalled the Diderot of earlier days to mind, the enthusiastic soul who had known prison himself and just barely escaped the persecution that had now fallen upon himself. Others who used to know him in those days let them know where they stood, one Ancelet, for example, an army officer, and above all, Deleyre who unburdened himself of the tribulations of his wife and himself in the uncongenial court at Parma, and of affliction, too, that their first-born was badly deformed in the feet and required the most patient of care. Touched by this trouble Rousseau told Deleyre to write him again, whenever it would be a help, and thus he renewed on his side the old ties that had been formed at Paris. Deleyre's joy over this reconciliation knew no bounds: 'you take the place for me of guardian angels and of the demon of Socrates'. He addressed himself passionately to his 'dear moralist', and 'dear and virtuous guide in the path of virtue'.¹

It was, indeed, a season of renewing all the old ties. Thus Mme de Boufflers whose advice he had too rudely rejected made known to him her deep interest and esteem for his person. And more important than this return of one who might have been estranged was the confidence of Mme de Chenonceaux, wife of the son of Mme Dupin at whose house he had begun his career, and for whom his studies on education had been begun. She had endured a most unhappy life, united with a man of unstable mind, and subject to the domination of her mother-in-law. She had always possessed Rousseau's respect for her quiet life, and for her frankness. She never hesitated, for example, to criticise his writings, and she had been particularly insistent on having him remove things of bad taste. Now her husband had lost his mind and was committed to care, and she found herself helpless as regards the management of her own family. Indeed, she herself was out of her head for a time, under the stress of the situation. But in the first moment of recovery she turned to Rousseau, writing him, and depending on him to understand and to speak to her with wisdom. At the same time she expressed her profound concern over his persecution (in her delirium she had talked about him and his danger), and she hoped he would find sure protection. There was an equality in this relationship

¹ *C.G.*, vol. ix, No. 1844; *C.G.* vol. x, 1865, 1874, 1881, 1944, 1987, 2007-8, 2022, 2025, 2032, 2043, vol. xi, 2064, 2104.

which made it, though bound up with various sorrows, a friendship of the truest color and the very substance of life.¹

So Mme de Chenonceaux understood him very well when she said at this time: 'you are not the man to be happy without ties.' It was what he needed at the moment, after the severance of relations with Geneva. And the need, fortunately, was met. These various friends solicited his attention, interested him in their lives and in their families, and gave him affection and respect. They took away the sense of having to defend his personal character, so that his thought could become more disinterested, and concerned primarily for the principles at stake. And thus a season of friendship, happily warming his heart when life was at low ebb, bore fruit in a master-work, the *Letters Written from the Mountain*. The work was ready June 9th, 1764.²

These *Letters* were an argument for the liberties and rights of all citizens of Geneva. They were a plea for the cause of the bourgeois who had made the 'representations' on behalf of the law. They were also a programme for the reuniting of the parties on the basis of principles common to them and to their religion. Besides liberty, justice, and religion, therefore, the cause was one of peace and unity. But Rousseau was honest about his own inner motives in this work. He made no pretense of treating the affair as if he himself were not a party nor deeply concerned with its issue. These *Letters* would also reason about the charge against his books and try to show that their principles were true to the spirit of the Constitution of Geneva and therefore deserving of honor in his own country. The cause he was defending was confessedly his own cause, as well as that of the public.

The government of any State is rightly concerned about the practical attitude of those who teach anything with regard to religion. Its interest is in 'justice, the public good, the social virtues, and all the duties of the man and citizen', everything vital to the 'social bond'. These were the things he had taught. But precisely because they were so absolutely estimable it had been necessary to attack the blind fanaticism, the superstition, and the stupid prejudices of men. 'Superstition is the most terrible scourge of the human race; it brutalises simple people, persecutes the wise, enchains whole nations; it produces on every hand frightful evils.' Its sole use is its ministry to tyrants. He was outspoken against all that—and were not they, too, in the republic of Geneva? Why, then, should their government interest itself in the opposite cause?

¹ C.G., vol. ix, No. 1733, vol. x, 1856, 1927, 1996, vol. xi, 2100.

² C.G., vol. xi, No. 2111.

Imagine a whole society of men dwelling with one another in the spirit of the teachings of the Savoyard Vicar. They recognise the authority of Jesus Christ in their lives and follow his precepts as their own. Some things seem too sublime for them, but, knowing the limits of knowledge generally as well as their own powers of will, they are prepared for a revelation of God in Him that is more than human. When they are unable to understand how all such things come to pass, they admit their difficulty, or, if the matter seems actually doubtful, their doubts. But neither their beliefs nor their doubts need be a rule for others. Suppose, now, that some others come disputing, who aver that these modest ones do not really believe because they do not profess literally everything, whether they understand it or not. The true Christians, recognising the right of all to their personal views, will not dispute but keep their peace and go their own way, continuing to treat all men as brothers and seeking unison with them under their common master. If they happen to be the greater part of the community, they can adopt a cult, but one as simple as their belief, the cult of virtue itself, where there are no invidious terms used such as 'devout' and 'orthodox'. Once committed to this religion by their own free consent 'all would be obliged by the laws to submit' to what it requires of them. For such a religion 'would not contain any article that does not relate to the good of the society', and certainly none useless to morality. Does this mean that the men of this religious society are to be intolerant? No, on the contrary, they are 'tolerant by principle'. They simply say to any one of their community: 'Admit with us the principles of the duty of the man and citizen, and for the rest, believe whatever you like.' Of course if any religions develop that are essentially bad, that is, if they lead man to do evil to his fellows, these are not to be tolerated since they contradict the end of all veritable tolerance, which is 'the peace of the human race'. 'The truly tolerant person does not tolerate crime in the least; he tolerates no dogma that renders men wicked.'

This described, however, an ideal situation. In the actual order such true Christians are inevitably in the minority—like the Protestants in France they do not form the substantial body of the community. What ought they to do, then, according to their principles? They should be men of peace, obedient to law, even in the matter of religion, unless that religion were itself positively conducive to human wickedness, in which case they ought to refuse to follow it. Such a case is extremely rare. The evil in a religion is largely due to 'bad interpretations', and in regard to them the true Christians will simply refuse the

interpretations for themselves, accept the essential, and tolerate all else, out of a love of peace as well as respect for the law. They are never to dispute, therefore, but always to maintain a charitable attitude and to join with others in their assemblies, and even adopt their formulas—this being Rousseau's own apology to those who had deemed him hypocritical for wanting to take the communion at Môtiers, &c. Such a spirit in a minority is certainly good for the public peace. What possible evil could there be in it? Of course, 'God will no longer be the organ of the wickedness of men. Religion will no longer serve as the instrument of the tyranny of churchmen and the vengeance of usurpers: it will serve more to make the believers good and just. . . . So the doctrine in question is good for the human race and ill for its oppressors'. And what say they at Geneva? Dared they object to this doctrine?

Yet this was exactly what the last chapter of his *Social Contract* meant, despite the puzzling statements that there could not be a republic of Christians and that Christians would not be good citizens. The point of those sayings was this: Christianity ceases to be itself if it is made an *establishment* in an exclusive, national society; and if it *does* remain true to itself in the hearts of men, it imparts to their lives a spiritual interest to which national concerns are inevitably subordinate, so that they do not really give themselves wholly to the State and its enterprises, particularly those of war. The Christian religion is a religion of peace and humanity, and therefore antithetic to a militant patriotism. The two are simply incompatible, and precisely because Christianity is universal it devotes men to something beyond the local neighborhood and country—it is 'too sociable'. Nevertheless every particular society or State has to have some religion for the morality of its citizens. He had believed this himself, and so he found a problem on his hands: how can a State *have* a religion if Christianity is not to be 'established'. It was a problem, indeed, only because of his own high ideal of the Christian religion. There were two alternatives, one to propose a 'civil religion' for his republic, the other—and this alternative was now being defined for the first time—to leave Christianity purely as it is, purely spiritual and without any connection with political institutions, and letting it operate freely in mankind and independently of any social system. He chose the first alternative in the *Social Contract* because he was so convinced of the insufficiency of civic obligation without a positive religion. He may have been in error, but if so it certainly was not due to any disparagement of the importance of religion. At the worst, his error was only one of politics and

not, therefore, a deep and punishable fault. Surely the general tenor of his book was anything but pernicious to the bonds of true society among mankind.¹

Was his work, perhaps, contrary to the 'civil religion' of Geneva itself? When the reformers separated themselves from the received Church they justified themselves by saying that they did so 'on their own authority, on that of their reason', that the Bible is clear and intelligible enough to all and they were competent to judge concerning its doctrine regarding their own salvation. Thus the authority of a Church was rejected in favor of a personal understanding of the truth. The Bible was the sole rule of belief, and it had no other interpreter than the individual. Here were the two fundamental points distinctive of the reformed religion of Geneva. It was no inconsistency in the reformers to propose to all of their following the doctrine of the greater number as 'the most probable or the most authorised'. In matters of practice 'there must be some order', and particularly in the *teaching* of religion; and for this alone the provision of doctrine was made. It did not follow from this, however, that 'the individuals are obliged to accept precisely the interpretations given to them, and the doctrine taught. Every one remains the sole judge for himself on that matter, and recognises no other authority except his own. Good teachings are meant less to fix the choice we ought to make than to put us into a position where we can choose well for ourselves. Such is the true spirit of the Reformation, such is its true foundation'. And surely the right of free interpretation of the Scripture contains that 'of remaining in doubt about what one finds doubtful, and that of not comprehending those things one finds incomprehensible'. So long as the principal points of the religion are accepted, one remains a member of the faith, and therefore true to his citizenship in that society. And the cardinal point of the reformed Geneva, was it not precisely *opposition* to the Roman Church on this matter of personal liberty in religion? A man who takes the same stand in his books is surely faithful to the spirit of the Reformation and to his oath as a citizen!

Alas, it was true, the spirit of the reformers themselves had never been perfectly that of the Reformation. They indulged in a very severe inquisition. Their fighting and disputing with the Catholic clergy gave them a punctilious and contentious spirit. They wanted to decide and regulate everything once and for all. The theological animus infected Calvin who, though really a great man 'had moreover all the pride of the genius who is conscious of his own superiority and indignant when any one

¹ *Lettre* 1, H., vol. iii, pp. 118 ff.

disputes it'. Most of his colleagues were like-minded, with less ground for their attitude. Their harsh theology was itself a heresy from the spirit of the Reformation. 'The Protestant religion is tolerant by principle, it is tolerant essentially; it is as much so as possible, since the only dogma it does not tolerate is that of intolerance. There you have the insurmountable barrier that separates us from the Catholics. . . .' So the church of Geneva ought not to have 'any precise and articulate profession of faith common to all its members'. The sole regulation it is entitled to enforce is that regarding the instructions which its pastors are to give in their teaching of others. Most certainly it has no right to 'chicane about the orthodoxy of a lay member'. Once D'Alembert had pointed the finger to a growing temporal interest in their clergy—was this true after all, and was he who then defended them now to be proved wrong by Geneva itself?

And were they not pretending to 'the infallibility of the Pope' when they took such exception to any admission of doubts and difficulties? They had experienced trouble themselves with the Catholics over the question of miracles and had claimed at the time of the Reformation that their only miracles were 'invincible arguments', and from that they had proceeded to arrogate to themselves what they refused others, they pretended they were always right, they wanted to convert everybody, even to constrain, they dogmatised and preached and excommunicated. The mantle of arrogance had fallen upon them. The Catholics had a way of asserting a revelation of God through miracles; 'when the Church had once decided that such and such a fact is a miracle, it is a miracle, for the Church cannot be mistaken'. But surely that is not the way for Protestants to talk.¹

In one respect the clergy had been neglectful of their rights in this affair. It was the law of Geneva that on all matters of faith the first authority was the Consistory who were charged with the duty of making a report on their own account to the government which then could proceed with its act of punishment. They had tamely allowed the governing authorities to decide such a matter on their own initiative. And these began by burning the books and ordering the arrest of the author and then pleaded 'public scandal', their own doing alone! And then persecution followed in Geneva, in its environs, in Berne and in Neuchâtel, and criminal processes in more than one place for the 'crime' of expressing views on religion. 'The judicial forms of the Inquisition' had been used against him for publishing a work designed 'to establish at once philosophic liberty and religious piety'.²

¹ *Lettres* 2-3, H., vol. iii, pp. 135 ff.

² *Lettres* 4-5, *ibid.*, pp. 165 ff.

There was another charge against him that the principles of his politics had a tendency 'to destroy all governments'. More closely examined, however, the accusation read only, 'most audacious criticism', which is far indeed from conspiracy against the law and the State. His *Social Contract* taught the 'obligation' of the citizen, which is founded on a free pact, the supremacy of the 'will of all' and the law expressing that will, the necessity of having the best few administering the government, an 'aristocracy' in that sense—and it also showed how force vitiated the obligation and how those in power usurped the authority of the law and of the whole body of the people. 'What do you think, . . . in reading this short and faithful analysis of my book? I divine already what it is. You would say to yourself: "Why *there* is the history of the government of Geneva".' Geneva had been in his eye all along, and otherwise his book would have been only another Utopia or a Republic of Plato. He had painted Geneva as a model for all Europe, and really hoped, instead of wanting to subvert all governments, to make them more like that exemplar, so as to establish an international order where Geneva would be seen everywhere. What a bitter irony it was that no other country in Europe had burned the book, except this one to whose Constitution it was such a tribute! Surely the true destroyers of government are those who thus turn the force of the law to their own human passions and enmities. Moreover, the *Social Contract* was appreciative even of governments other than the republican, so that it had the character of being a treatise on 'natural right and politics' which by the law of Geneva itself was entitled to immunity from prosecution. Others had written books with the same principles, Algernon Sidney, who, unhappily, acted on his views and paid for doing so with his life, and Althusius who had his enemies in Germany but was safe, Locke in England, and Montesquieu and St. Pierre in France—all these men were honored, though they lived under kings and not in a republic. And is it truly he, then, who is in dishonor, or those of Geneva who tried to put down his work and defame him?¹

And Rousseau was not willing in the least to surrender his right to offer a criticism of the government of Geneva. Four of the *Letters* were devoted to an examination of the state of things there, in terms both of his own principles and of the constitutional history of the land, as defined by the various edicts which had established, and subsequently reformed, its political system. In making this critical study he was acting on the behalf of those worthy citizens who had taken up his

¹ *Lettre 6* (references to *Lettres 6–9* are in Vaughan, vol. ii), pp. 197–206.

defense and wanted their cause stated effectively before the world as a public cause. He was also responding to the appeal of Lenieps, that he should assist in restoring the sovereign authority of the people in their General Assembly. But most of all he was trying to show the way to a settlement of the immediate issue so that peace and unity might be re-established in his own country. The good citizens who had made a lawful representation to their governing body, charging that the laws had been violated, had been replied to with an arrogant negative—what ought they to do next?

According to the Constitution the rights and resources of the free citizens of Geneva were clear enough. No people had more real liberty; they obeyed laws which they themselves had imposed; they elected their own chiefs, and were judged in courts only according to their own forms of procedure, and finally, in their General Assembly they were legislators, and the supreme power, independent, able to make war and peace, veritably 'sovereign'. As far as its form went, this State was certainly ideal, and its people enjoyed a perfect freedom. Yet the actuality was far otherwise. The citizens lived in a condition of slavery. The executive body was the interpreter and judge of the laws, and placed itself above them; the chiefs of State had powers other than those conferred on them by the sovereign, and they extended these unlawful powers farther and farther for their own personal aggrandisement. While the people did elect their own chiefs, they were in fact limited in their choice to members of that very governing Council whose interest it was to get all the power into its own hands. The citizens would not be really free until they could reject all such candidates, if they chose, and elect some of their own nomination. Thus the chiefs of the Republic were not really their own choice. Further, while it was true enough that they could not have any taxes imposed on them without their consent, they had no power to reject certain old, standing taxes which had been in effect since the time of the last Edict of Mediation. And further, although the legal procedure for the executive was fixed by law itself, no other body, not even the General Assembly of the whole State, possessed the right to constrain that body in case it acted unlawfully, nor to oblige it to make reparation for any illegality. Once the people were convened in General Assembly, of course, they were acknowledged to be sovereign and they might express their opposition to any such unlawfulness; but, alas, they could not meet thus save at the pleasure of the executive itself which alone had authority to convoke them; nor could they, even when assembled, consider any question

which had not been submitted to them by those same magistrates. Where, then, was their boasted sovereignty, and where their freedom?¹

The history of events in Geneva only illustrated the gloomy predictions of the *Social Contract* as to the tendency of human government to decline. Gradually and surreptitiously the usurpation of public rights comes about and is accepted, until those who protest on behalf of the law itself actually seem to be innovators and disturbers of the peace. If the people generally begin to murmur, they are answered with an impatient question: 'What are you complaining about? Look at the precedents; we aren't innovating in the least.' Yet, in the case of Geneva, it could easily be proved, on many counts, that the governing body had departed from the letter as well as 'the spirit of the Constitution'.

But Rousseau was chiefly concerned in seeking out what provision there might be for saving the State in such a contingency, for checking the usurpation by lawful means, restoring to the people their sovereignty and re-establishing the rule of law. Surely the whole body, besides making the laws of the State, must have the function of *maintaining* them against violation and mal-administration. There is certainly the right of 'inspection over the executive power'. Indeed, such a right was immemorial in the history of Geneva. It had been the practice to hold 'periodic assemblies', meeting at stated times without need of a summons from the executive. If this could be restored, however, other powers would have to be allowed besides the mere right to assemble—such, for instance, as the right to propose, discuss, and decide matters with or without the initiative of the executive body, and, above all, the right to maintain their own order in assembly. For 'it is contrary to all reason that the executive body should regulate the policing of the legislative body, that it should prescribe the matters of which they ought to take cognisance, that it should interdict their right of giving an opinion, and that it should exercise its absolute power even as regards the very acts themselves that are designed for controlling itself'. Thus Rousseau argued on behalf of the ancient rights of the 'periodic assembly', as the patriot Lenieps wanted him to do.

But 'periodic assembly' was really a thing of the past for those citizens who were concerned about the cause of law in Geneva. The abrogation of such assembly was one of the very usurpations against which they had been long complaining. So the protesting citizens had sought to avail themselves of another

¹ *Lettre 7*, Vaughan, vol. ii, pp. 206–291.

right which had not yet been denied them and was founded on their Constitution. If any members of the State had reason to think that the government, 'the depositaries of that work (the law and Constitution), were abusing their trust and making themselves be obeyed in the name of the laws while disobeying them themselves', the watchful citizens were entitled to call attention to the affair and bring it up for judgment. This was the right to make representations. But in the present case when a certain number of citizens took such lawful action they were simply ignored and given to understand nothing would be done. 'What! This right of representation would consist uniquely in sending in a paper that they are not even required to read, or can merely give a response drily in the negative? That right, so solemnly stipulated in compensation for all the sacrifices, would be limited to the rare prerogative of demanding and obtaining nothing? To dare advance such a proposition is to accuse the Mediators of having dealt with the bourgeoisie of Geneva with most unworthy deceit; it is to offend the probity of the plenipotentiaries, the equity of the mediating powers: it is to wound all decency, it is to outrage even common sense.'¹ For this right was the sole one remaining to the citizens, and it must be a thing of some effect.

The bourgeois of Geneva were in an intolerable predicament. 'When they put you out of a right to take your steps as one body, they have no right to object to you that you are only private individuals.' They were not allowed to assemble and show themselves in force as one body, even in the defense of their own laws. But when they made use of their only available right to make representations concerning illegal action, they were considered to represent simply nobody. They were not pretending to propose any new laws, for it would be proper for the government to exercise its veto power over such initiatives on the part of the citizens, contrary to the forms of the Constitution. But it was certainly wrong of the government, and dangerous, to rebuff the claim of the citizens that the existing laws of the State were being violated. No people could ever tolerate such a denial of the right to have their own laws properly executed. And if they were countered thus at every turn, what was left them? Force? No, not that, for it was 'a terrible recourse!'²

There was an issue in Geneva between the many and the few. The natural interest of the governing group is always in privilege. 'For ambition, like avarice, grows with its own gains; and the more one extends one's power, the more one is devoured with the desire to have power over all. Incessantly attentive to

¹ *Lettre 8*, Vaughan, vol. ii, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 244-7.

mark the distances that are too little felt among their equals by birth, they see in them only their inferiors, and burn to see them their subjects. Armed with all the public force, depository of all the authority, interpreter and dispenser of the laws that hamper them, they use them as an offensive and defensive arm which makes them mighty, respected, sacred for all who would outrage them. It is in the name of the law itself they would transgress it with impunity. . . . This body has, then, the will to extend its powers and the means of attaining whatever it intends to do. . . . Once more, now, there is no possible liberty save in the observation of the laws or of the general will. . . . The first and greatest public interest is always justice. All want the conditions to be equal for all, and justice is nothing but that equality. The citizen wants only the laws and the observation of the laws. Every individual among the people knows well enough that there are exceptions, and that they will never be in his own favor. Hence all fear exceptions, and whoever fears exceptions loves the law. With the chiefs, again, it is another story; their status itself is one of preference, and they seek preference on every side. They want the laws in order to put themselves in their place and make themselves be feared in their name. Everything favors them in this project: they make use of the rights they do have in order to usurp without risk those they do not have. Since they always speak in the name of the law, even in violating it, whoever dares to defend it against them is a seditious fellow, a rebel; and he ought to perish. And for them, always sure of impunity in their enterprises, the worst that can happen is not to succeed. If they have need of any supports, they find them everywhere. There is a natural league here, that of the strong, and what makes the weakness of the weak is that they have no power to league themselves likewise. . . .'

'The true path of tyranny is not to attack the public good at all directly, for that would be to rouse up all the world in defense, but to attack successively all its defenders, and frighten away any one else who might aspire to be one. . . . And what will be the organ of the generality when every individual is going to keep silent?'¹

Rousseau believed that he indeed had spoken for the generality of the people. He saw that the government was intransigent. It would not call an extraordinary assembly, nor allow discussion and judgment of the affair to come before any regular General Council of the citizens. It would do nothing about the representations. It would have to reckon, therefore, with a continued and growing suspicion that the laws and the liberties of

¹ *Lettre 9*, *ibid.*, pp. 281-7.

the State were being attacked and its sovereignty usurped. As for the bourgeois whose cause was the law, they had no alternative save to force matters to another Mediation by outside Powers. Here lay a great danger, that these foreign Powers might take advantage of the weakness of the State to attain its freedom. To guard against this outcome Rousseau gave the following counsel: 'Above all, reunite yourselves, all of you. You are lost without resource, if you remain divided. And why should you when such great common interests unite you? How is it possible, in such like danger, for low jealousy and petty passions to dare let themselves be heard? . . . In a word, it is here a matter less of deliberation than of concord. The choice of the part you will take is not the most important matter; even if it be bad in itself, take it all together, and by that fact alone it will become the best choice. And you will always do what ought to be done, provided you do it in concert. That is my parting advice, and I end with the same thought as I began.'¹

In this spirit Rousseau, citizen no more, but still the 'philosopher of Geneva', contributed his dues to the Republic of his dreams and affection.

¹ *Lettre 9*, Vaughan, vol. ii, p. 291.

CHAPTER XXII

LAST THOUGHTS ON POLITICS

THE *Letters from the Mountain* harbored 'indocile ideas that wanted to take their course despite myself'.¹ Rousseau craved some new piece of work which would 'fix' those ideas. He thought of writing the Life of some great republican or lover of liberty in modern times—and Keith suggested to him that of a compatriot who, in his opinion, was worthy of such attention, Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun. The ideas that were so 'indocile' were obviously, then, ideas having to do with liberty.

'We must think less about authority, and more about liberty.'² And some of those liberal thoughts had been already expressed in the *Letters on the Constitution of Geneva*.

'Liberty consists less in doing one's own will than in not being subject to that of another; it consists further in not subjecting the will of others to our own. Whoever is master cannot be free; and to reign is to obey . . . I do not know any liberty truly free except that to which no one has the right to oppose resistance. In the common liberty no one has a right to do what the liberty of any other enjoins; and true liberty is never destructive of itself. Thus liberty that is without justice is a veritable contradiction. . . . There is no liberty whatsoever, then, without laws, or where any one is above the laws. . . . A free people obey, but they do not serve; they have chiefs, but not masters; they obey the laws, but they obey only the laws, and it is in virtue of the force of the laws that they do not obey men. . . . A people is free, whatever the form of government, when, in him who governs, they see not the man but the organ of the law. In a word, liberty always follows the destiny of the laws; it reigns or perishes with them—I know nothing more certain.'³

Consequently we must think more about obligation to the law than about authority. 'What is it that makes a State one? It is the union of its members. And whence arises the union of its members? From the obligation that binds them.' And 'what surer foundation can there be for an obligation among men than the free engagement of the one who obliges himself?' What is called 'sovereignty' in the language of politics is in reality 'the will of all', and government proper is merely the

¹ To Milord Marshal, Aug. 21, 1764 (after receiving the first proofs of the *Letters from the Mountain*), C.G., vol. xi, No. 2170; cf. to Rey, No. 2176, and Nos. 2136, 2205.

² *Lettres de la Montagne*, *Lettre* 7, Vaughan, vol. ii, p. 220.

³ *Ibid.*, *Lettre* 8, pp. 234-5.

executive application of that will of a free community.¹ The obligation is the thing, rather than the sovereignty.

And in the sphere of religion, tolerance is important, not orthodoxy. That was the final meaning of the troublesome last chapter of the *Social Contract*, as explained in these *Letters*. Tolerance is the forswearing, among all the citizens, of that spirit of intolerance which destroys their social relation and unity. Surely the members of any State are obliged not to violate the very principle itself of their common life together: they are, therefore, veritably obliged to be tolerant. So far all was clear, and in accord with the ideal of liberty. But there had been included certain positive dogmas. Are all obliged to believe these as well? Can they, indeed, be obliged in any matter of belief? According to his own principles Rousseau recognised that his proposals on that score might have been 'an error of politics'.² He had broached this doctrine early in his argument, when he wanted to safeguard men against domination by a Church as well as by rulers: the allegiance to the civil religion was offered as sufficient, and thus no one would be 'forced to go to Paradise' according to the dictates of the orthodox. The 'civil religion' had been intended as a guarantee of liberty. Here in the *Letters* an alternative was now suggested, that the natural religion of man, or what is all one, the Gospel of Jesus, should be allowed to establish itself in the hearts of men through its intrinsic truth and beauty and holiness, and thuswise become a universal, saving power among mankind. But this simply means perfect freedom in religion; and so finally, it appears, tolerance belongs with liberty as an absolute principle for the life of men in society.³

Yet how are men ever to unite in religious community, on this basis of the liberty of each to believe his own way? The question had been put to the early reformers, and now, ironically enough, it was being put to Rousseau by their descendants. He answered them, interpreting the Protestant Reform: 'They were all united with each other precisely on this point, that they all recognised every one of them as a judge competent for himself. They tolerated, and they ought to have tolerated, all interpretations save one, namely that which takes away the liberty of interpretation.' Hence it was they could stand solidly together against the Church of Rome which denied that principle on which they were all agreed. Nay more, 'even the diversity itself of their ways of thinking on all the rest was the common bond that united them. They were just so many little

¹ *Lettres de la Montagne*, *Lettre* 6, pp. 199–201.

² *Ibid.*, *Lettre* 1, H., vol. iii, p. 131.

³ *Ibid.*, *Lettre* 1, p. 131.

States leagued against a Great Power, where the general confederation took away nothing whatsoever from the independence of each and every member.¹

Tolerance is essentially one with the principle of politics involved in all pacts, leagues, confederations among men. It is a political right. And the right to believe what one understands for oneself, without dictation from anybody whatsoever, must therefore be secured along with all the other civil rights. It must be part of the Constitution of the society, the true law of the community. Religious freedom must be guaranteed within the State.

So much for the theory. But Rousseau was now more than ever concerned about the practical question: How is it possible to safeguard law, right and liberty among mankind as they are, not as they ought to be? He had argued all along for the assembly of the whole people as the great saving institution in politics. It is in assembly that men establish their original union in society and their laws and their government, and surely they ought by the same means to supervise the execution of their own laws. Hence it is right, and very necessary, to have 'an inspection of the government by the generality'.² Nevertheless events at Geneva had showed how even this safeguard could be outwitted by private interests who were quick to perceive that the general assembly of the citizens was 'a means of forcing the magistrates and all the orders to stay within the limits of their duties and rights'. These interested parties had contrived to discredit the assembly by disorders instigated by themselves; they had managed to impugn the worth of public opinion and then to defy it. The interests of the general public were clear enough in such a situation. 'Every individual among the people knows well enough there are exceptions, and that they will never be in his own favor. Hence all fear exceptions, and whoever fears exceptions loves the law.' The public are thus interested in the maintenance of law in the State. But how effective can they be? Without any unison they are weak against the 'natural league of the strong'. 'What makes the very weakness of the weak is that they have no power to league themselves likewise.'³ And this now seemed to Rousseau the one great object of all practical politics, to provide some means whereby the opinion and will of the general public shall be ever united and effectual against threats to the rights and liberties of all.

After speaking his mind about Geneva and the unhappy

¹ *Ibid.*, *Lettre 2*, p. 136.

² *Lettres 8 and 9*, Vaughan, vol. ii, pp. 236, 284.

³ *Lettre 9*, pp. 284-5.

controversies in which he had been implicated, Rousseau was not really done with politics. The explaining of his views sharpened his own apprehension of the essential meanings of his thought. And so it was that 'indocile ideas' continued to haunt his mind and press for some kind of embodiment in writing. There was a further development of thought to be put on record.

The writing of a Life of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, as Keith had suggested, was hardly the thing to do to express these last thoughts on politics. It was necessary to wait for information to come all the way from Berlin, and Rousseau was impatient. Then suddenly a new proposal came, from a patriot of Corsica, asking him in the name of them all to draw up a Constitution for their new State which had won its independence of Genoa and was then seeking to preserve itself in the European system. This request was the fruit of his own generous tribute in the *Social Contract* to their fine spirit of liberty. He was tempted by the call, and kindled to enthusiasm; but wise now in the difficulties of politics, he realised how very great a task it would be: 'I lack a whole mass of information relative to the nation and the country, information that is indispensable, and to get which would require of you (the patriot, Buttafoco) many instructions, explanations, memoirs, &c., and of myself, much study and reflection. . . . And in fine, I lack experience in affairs, which alone enlightens one more in the art of conducting men than all the meditations in the world. . . . Before submitting my work to the examination of the nation and its chiefs, I want to begin by being content with it myself; I do not want to give out anything piece by piece; the work ought to be a whole; people could not possibly judge it in separate bits.'¹ Consequently the work would require a great deal of time. In reply to this the Corsicans said they would be willing to wait. And Rousseau set about the plan of a work which he expected to take four years to complete. Though his friend Keith cordially approved of his new undertaking, he also created some misgivings in his letters by animadverting on the local 'superstition and the ruses of the priests', for he was acquainted with Corsica. And Deleyre, living nearer the scene was more emphatic and fearful on the score of the religious fanaticism of the people, and warned his master against trying to 'meddle with the affairs of men' as a Legislator. These communications made the project diminish insensibly in value; yet the moralist adhered to it, still enthu-

¹ To Buttafoco, Sept. 22, 1764, *C.G.*, vol. xi, No. 2207. Buttafoco's first letter, Aug. 31, No. 2178. Following correspondence, Nos. 2220, 2237, vol. xii, 2274, vol. xiii, 2480 *bis*, 2535, 2572 *bis*, 2651, vol. xiv, 2799.

siastic over the opportunity to express his ideas: 'Never mind, without thinking of the impossibility of success, I shall occupy myself with these poor fellows just as if my reveries could really be of some use to them. Since I am devoted to chimeras, I want to forge for myself at least agreeable ones. In dreaming of what men might be, I shall try to forget what they are. . . .'¹

The *Project of a Constitution for Corsica* could not advance very far without instructions. In the period of waiting for them he indulged himself in the 'fury of learning botany' which had shortly before come upon him, and this interest brought to his side a new companion, Du Peyrou, who was destined to be of great service to him in the fateful events to come.²

For the world of actualities, and of men as they are, was destined to reclaim the attention of the moralist from his agreeable chimeras. The author of the *Letters from the Mountain* was by his very deed tied still to the affairs of Geneva and subject to influences therefrom. Hardly were the *Letters* in circulation when a *Reply* was put out by his enemies in Geneva, a pamphlet of eight pages of malicious personal attack, under the title, *Sentiment of the Citizens*. It held up his work as a 'new libel . . . outraging with fury the Christian religion, the Reformation he professes, all the ministers of the Gospel, and all the bodies of the State'. The 'citizens' had deemed him only demented before, but when he embarked on 'crime' they lost all patience. Indeed he had gone so far as to insult Jesus Christ himself by showing what 'an infernal soul analysing the Scripture' might make of it. He had ridiculed, too, the miracles of the Saviour! And he had accused of bad faith those who professed to believe their religion in its entirety. Could any one born in Geneva be allowed to give such offense to its pastors? Yet neither this round of charges nor another that he was but 'a low seditious fellow' deserving capital punishment, was so terrible to read as the following: 'We avow with grief and blushes that this is a man who still bears the dreadful marks of his own debauches on him and who, disguised as a mountebank, drags about with him from village to village, and from mountain to mountain, the unfortunate woman whose mother he caused to die and whose children he exposed at the door of a hospital, rejecting the care that a charitable person wanted to take of them, and abjuring thus all the sentiments of nature as he divested himself

¹ Correspondence with Keith and Deleyre, vol. xi, 2250, vol. xii, 2264, 2316. Cf. Vaughan, on Corsica, vol. ii, pp. 292-305.

² To Duchesne, Sept. 15, vol. xi, No. 2198. To Du Peyrou, Nos. 2194, 2199, 2210, 2227, CG., vol. xii, 2265.

of those of honor and religion.' Whence could that horribly distorted revelation come, if not from a person once intimate with him, or with those to whom he had confessed his fault? There had been but two people in Geneva who were so informed—Mme d'Épinay and Dr. Tronchin, with whom he had also discussed his problem about Mme Le Vasseur. But that libel breathed a distinct clerical animus, like that of the minister Vernes, who was close to Tronchin. Rousseau, excited beyond all endurance by his exposure in such a malignant light, straightway concluded that Vernes was the guilty person. He dashed off some comments on the pages of his copy, correcting a misstatement that the magistrates of Geneva had not acted until after those of Berne and Paris, referring the reader to the passages of his *Letters* which dealt with the Scriptures, citing the medical men who would vouch for the true nature of his affliction, speaking of Thérèse as unfortunate only in being the sharer of his distress, asserting the fact that her mother was still alive and sound, and denying that he actually 'exposed' any children.

'A person who would have had that pretended charity would have had that of keeping the secret. . . . I should much rather have done what the author (of this passage) accuses me of doing than to have written the like of it.' Lastly he mentioned as evidence that he was not a trouble-maker the sacrifices he had made for the peace of his own country.¹ Then he rashly sent this copy containing these notes of defense to his publisher in Paris for immediate reprinting, and with it went a covering letter where he openly accused Vernes of authorship. But the moment it appeared, Vernes formally denied all knowledge of the libel, and he even went so far as to say that he had 'everywhere expressed the horror it could not but inspire in every good man'. At once Rousseau hastened to stop the issue of the reprint. He wrote Vernes: 'I have written to Paris to have them suppress the edition I was having made of that piece. If I can contribute in some way to confirm your disavowal you have only to command me.' But he also set inquiries on foot to satisfy himself, for he really did not believe in Vernes's innocence.²

Meanwhile the Venerable Company of pastors at Geneva cited the *Letters Written from the Mountain* to the government as being a direct attack on Christianity. An official *Declaration* outlawed them and their author. The ministers of Neuchâtel were attempting something similar. But the civic party of

¹ *Sentiment des citoyens*, and Rousseau's commentary, in *Appendice, C.G.*, vol. xii, pp. 367 ff.

² Correspondence with Vernes, Feb. 2, 1765, Nos. 2421, 2422, 2437; vol. xiii, No. 2455; and with Du Peyrou, No. 2435; Moulton, No. 2436; Lenieps, No. 2447.

'representants' were also displaying their strength. 'Yesterday', the younger De Luc wrote, 'there passed one of the most memorable days the Republic has ever had. The Representation, a copy of which my brother sent you last Wednesday, was carried by the generality of the citizens and bourgeois, more than eleven hundred, marching two by two with a decorum truly worthy of admiration. But how that day, which made an epoch in the Republic, went through is even more wonderful: one can well say that the Supreme Being who has always been our protector has given evidence anew on this occasion of his goodness in our regard . . .'—and there was much more about the bourgeois firmly asserting their rights against the government. They claimed that in doing this they were but following the policy indicated in the *Letters from the Mountain*.¹ But Rousseau himself did not consider it so. He had recommended that they act together in peace and in concord; here they were two fierce factions, the 'negatives' favoring the governing Council, and the bourgeois 'representants'. While he felt strongly partisan himself, as he admitted privately to Lenieps, yet his public advice was still that they should make peace and drop his case. 'Do you know the slant the small Council has taken in that affair?' It is one of their best juggleries. To get ahead of the bourgeoisie they complain louder than they do, and nineteen of their members, regarding themselves as dishonored by my book and by the *Response to the Letters from the Country*, proudly threaten to resign office, if they (the bourgeois) do not go, cord about the neck, to cry mercy. Can't you see all our poor bourgeois already at their knees: for they are too stupid to let them (the councilors) go ahead and resign! It is George Dandin who asks pardon of his wife for having objected to the honor of being made cuckold. They ought to have made a new and very obsequious representation yesterday: I have myself exhorted them to do so. That is not, however, what I should do in their place: but, offended party that I am, I ought to guard against myself and I should never forgive myself for fanning the fire.' And Lenieps was then informed that he would write nothing more on Geneva, that he wanted to have nothing further to do with their affairs—both for their peace and for his own.² The resolve was well taken, for the opinion was fast spreading that he was a cause of sedition. For example, the unhappy Mme de Chenonceaux forwarded him a letter from Abbé de Mably explaining some very critical remarks of his which had come to Rousseau's ears: 'I have been sorry for you in your misfortunes, just as I am for

¹ From G. A. De Luc, C.G. 12, No. 2440; from Vieussieux, No. 2441.

² To Lenieps, No. 2447.

Socrates, but permit me to say it to you, to venge himself on his judges Socrates did not try to excite a sedition in Athens. I do not believe it would be prudent to seek to perfect a democratic government by arming the citizens against the magistrates. I render justice to the purity of your intentions and the rectitude of your heart. . . . You are outraged, but in sacrificing your resentment, people will not confine themselves to admiring your talents, they will love your philosophy. . . .'¹

But there were some who already loved his philosophy, and to them Rousseau sent a message of real wisdom. Thus to Moulton, 'One could not go any farther without exposing one's country and the public repose, which the wise man ought never to do. When there is no longer any common liberty, there remains one recourse, and that is to cultivate personal liberty, that is to say, virtue. The virtuous man is always free, for in always doing his duty he never does anything but what he wants. . . .' And he followed that with an appeal to the brothers De Luc heading the party of representants: 'You are men too good to push matters to the extreme and not to prefer peace to liberty. A people ceases to be free when the laws have lost their force; but virtue never loses its force, and the virtuous man remains ever free. There, Sirs, is your resource from now on; it is grand enough, fine enough to console you for all that you lose as citizens. For myself, I take the only part that remains to me, and I take it irrevocably. Since with such pure intentions, with such love of justice and truth, I have done nothing but ill on this earth, I do not want to do any more, and I retire within myself. I do not want to hear further of Geneva or whatever transpires there. Our correspondence ends now. I shall bear affection for you all my life, but I shall write to you no more.'²

It had been written in the *Republic* of Plato, that the wise man is conscious, 'there is scarcely a person who takes a single judicious step in his public life . . . such a wise man keeps quiet and confines himself to his own concerns, like one who takes shelter behind a wall on a stormy day, when the wind is driving before it a hurricane of dust and rain; and when from his retreat he sees the infection of lawlessness spreading over the rest of mankind, he is well content, if he can in any way live his life here untainted in his own person by unrighteousness and unholy deeds, and, when the time for his release arrives, take his departure amid bright hopes with cheerfulness and serenity'.³

¹ From de Mably, No. 2450.

² To Moulton, C.G., vol. xiii, No. 2462; to brothers De Luc, No. 2473.

³ *Rep.* 496 (Davies and Vaughan), p. 214.

Such was the philosophy of Rousseau at this moment. But men would not let him practice it. He wanted to drop all the argument about that libel. Vernes, however, who was really wronged by the accusation of authorship, pressed for a retraction.¹ Rousseau had much he would like to say about the integrity of that minister of the Gospel and found it hard to restrain himself from a personal attack. Here his old friend Lenieps was an influence in the wrong direction, because of his bias against the clergy. He wrote from Paris to say that Vernes, despite his 'honest disavowal', could not clear himself in the eyes of those who were acquainted with the facts and with his past. 'He will not absolve himself of having said to M. Durade that you were a man rotten with disease, and the latter of having said it to every comer; and these are facts that have come to me from good quarters.' Besides, the sentiments of the piece were most certainly the work of some minister wanting to avenge his confreres. There was, indeed, talk of its emanating from 'the Inquisitor', meaning Voltaire—which happened to be the truth, since Voltaire had gained possession of that haunting 'secret' from Dr. Tronchin—but this seemed to Lenieps all a blind.² And why, if 'every good man felt horror' over such a libel, as Vernes professed, why did not those good pastors of Geneva go on record against it! After such words from a third party, Rousseau felt confirmed in his own first thoughts, and this despite the doubts consistently expressed by various other friends about his attribution of the libel.³ He could not now make the desired retraction, not without belying his own opinion—consequently he broke off all relations with Vernes.⁴ This was done the same day he sent a message to the brothers De Luc that they should seek peace and not implicate him any further in the affairs of Geneva.

However, that was not the true way to repose. It was not satisfactory to himself, because he recognised it had been wrong of him to make the accusation of Vernes. And the injured party still insisted on a public reparation, failing to get which he published the letters that had passed between them.⁵ This impelled Rousseau to write out his case in a *Declaration Relative to Pastor Vernes*, and go over the whole history of their intercourse. He intended, on first impulse, to publish this piece. But it

¹ Corr. with Vernes, Nos. 2455 and 2466.

² See Dufour, note in *C.G.*, vol. iv, pp. 202-3; *Annales*, vol. i, p. 53.

³ From Lenieps, *C.G.*, vol. xiii, No. 2472; and cf. from Du Peyrou, about Apr. 20, No. 2587; cf. from Vieusseux, vol. xiii, No. 2413; Moulton, vol. xiii, No. 2454, p. 5.

⁴ To Vernes, Feb. 24, No. 2475 (cf. No. 2474, a long argument, not sent).

⁵ From Vernes, No. 2484, see note *C.G.*, vol. xiii, p. 61; *Declaration*, H. 9, pp. 82-101.

happened that his good friend Du Peyrou was bent on undertaking a justification, in a *Letter to M. . . . relative to J. J. Rousseau*, called the *Letter from Goa*. Since it was much better to have such things done by the hand of another, Rousseau abandoned his own project and contented himself with supplying the facts to Du Peyrou.¹ But his own pen had now been given something of a turn at writing in personal defense.

And the doings of others forced him further towards making a defense or apology. The leaders of the party in Geneva ignored his plea for silence about their affair and wrote him jubilantly, 'the honor of the bourgeoisie and the public good have triumphed over private interest and seductions of every sort', for the General Council had dared to assert its sovereignty and to vote down the tax on wine so long established that it had been regarded as a 'fundamental law' of the State.² This would certainly force the issue to another Mediation by outside Powers. And even the moderate Moulou was now excited. He resented the charges of sedition made against his master, and knowing that his very letters had been 'masterpieces of patriotism' he announced he was now determined to carry forward his own account of the treatment Rousseau had received at the hands of official Geneva.³ And all the while, too, Lenieps had been urging him to play his part in the new developments. 'You, my friend, and the author of the *Reply* (Vieusesux) have wisely indicated the vices of the government. They now have a right to expect of you the remedies. After which, quit the pen, and if you are not crowned, forget the ungrateful wretches with whom you have had to do; but until then, serve them and be generous to the end.' 'In all these things there are some remedies. It is necessary to draw them up in general lines, for there is reason to believe that things must come to a Mediation, and that the Mediation must be instructed, and the citizens must be in a position to speak and to defend themselves.'⁴ So what de Mably and others regarded as sedition, Lenieps considered his duty. But the fighting patriot then misunderstood his motive for holding aloof from action. He took pains to reassure him that he need not fear participating in the affair because of the suspicious presence in Môtiers of a knight of Malta, that this person in disguise was surely not any emissary of the King of Prussia to cause trouble for him. It made Rousseau furious that he should be supposed to have such foolish fears. And Lenieps made matters worse by an indiscretion. He

¹ Corr. with Du Peyrou, Nos. 2518, 2555, 2561, 2564, 2573, 2577, 2580-1, 2587, 2598-9.

² From J. F. De Luc, No. 2495.

³ From Moulou, No. 2496.

⁴ From Lenieps, No. 2485.

had so relished Rousseau's scathing remark about the bourgeois as stupid as George Dandin that he showed the letter to another Genevan, with the result that an imperfect copy of it was soon being circulated in Geneva and it was seized upon greedily by the opposition as a means of breaking up the forces of the bourgeoisie. And the leaders of the latter wrote asking him if he had really written such a thing. Thus his judicious holding aloof from the controversy at Geneva was made to seem a contempt of themselves and their cause. 'Will it be necessary', he cried out, 'for me to make my apology to those as well for whom I have sacrificed myself?'¹

The situation was becoming desperate. He could not write to his friends at Geneva without their involving him further. More libels, too, were appearing. The party feelings were coming to be violent. He saw no way out for himself save to go far from the region. But where to go was a question he could not for the life of him decide—he did not care for England, despite the constant urging of that refuge by his advisers; he wanted to be with Keith, but Berlin was too far off; he dallied with the notion of residing in Corsica to do his work there, but it was also very far, and the superstition of which he had been warned made it an unlikely place for him: he preferred Savoy most of all but had no assurances of safety there.² Besides, conditions at Môtiers had developed in such a way that he did not want to leave at the moment, lest it be construed as guilty flight.³ For the 'Neuchâtel heads' had now become highly excited, thanks to the preachings of their pastor Montmollin. Rousseau was actually requested to withdraw from the communion, but he refused; he was then summoned before the Consistory, but he denied their right to summon a lay member. He consented, however, to renounce all further writing on Geneva and religion. But he immediately appealed to the civil authorities of Neuchâtel for protection. By orders of the king he was put out of the reach of the hostile clergy who were then called to give an account of themselves.⁴

When thus officially sustained, he felt free, at last, to take steps toward leaving the locality. In late spring and early summer of 1765 he went visiting and botanising, and he took

¹ Corr. with Lenieps, Nos. 2512, 2526, 2534, 2588, 2611; with De Luc, Nos. 2531, 2537, 2576; from Th. Rousseau, No. 2524.

² From Mme de Verdelin, No. 2500, and reply, No. 2507; from Milord Marshal, No. 2510; to Prince de Wurtemberg, No. 2509 (on Savoy); to Buttafoco, No. 2535; to Milord Marshal, Nos. 2540, 2559; from Mme de Verdelin, No. 2584.

³ To Du Peyrou, Nos. 2408, 2518; to Mme de Verdelin, 2545.

⁴ To Meuron, No. 2501; to Moulton, No. 2503; to Montmollin, No. 2504; to Consistory, No. 2541, and with Meuron, Nos. 2562-3, 2578.

a particular fancy to the Île de St. Pierre in the Lake of Bienné, although it was in the canton of Berne, whence he had previously been banned. Meanwhile Montmollin issued a *Refutation* of Du Peyrou's *Letter*, and it was so 'outrageous' that Rousseau felt constrained to write his friend a complete account of their relations, to be used in some further *Letter* of justification. And the tyrannising clerical animus incensed him. 'The ordinary procedure of the gentlemen of the church appears to me admirably suited to their purpose: after having established in principle their competence regarding every scandal, they excite the scandal on whatsoever object pleases them, and then, in virtue of the scandal which is their own work, they assume control of the affair in order to judge it. There you see the way they can make themselves masters of all people, of all laws, of all kings, and of all the earth without any one's having the least word to say to them.'¹

The answer of Montmollin was to hold further discourses which excited the population against the 'anti-Christ' and led some of them to stone his house. And it was precisely at this time that his true friend and neighbor from Montmorency, Mme de Verdelin, realised her long-cherished wish to pay him a visit—she witnessed this horrifying demonstration and sadly counselled him to leave the place.² Although the officials of the community expressed their regrets, and Frederick of Prussia gave orders to Montmollin, Rousseau departed from Môtiers.

He went to the Île de St. Pierre on assurances that he would be permitted to stay; but he was shortly after ordered to leave.³ He could not make up his mind then about a destination. He applied to Mme de Verdelin to procure a passport for him to go to England by way of France. But the misgivings which even she had, as well as certain others, about his going to a land so far away from old friends, and where he did not know the language, intimidated him.⁴ When he made his next move, therefore, it was to swerve in the direction of Berlin, where Keith would welcome him. He got only as far as Strasbourg, however, where he turned back upon receiving the invitation of David Hume to escort him to England. There, ignorant of the language and the customs, tremulous from his recent harassing time and finding it difficult to keep up old, sustaining ties, he was bound to suffer grave misapprehensions both as to facts and persons. The result was another public break, this time

¹ To Du Peyrou, *C.G.*, vol. xiv, No. 2716; to Guy, No. 2717.

² From Mme de Verdelin, No. 2747; to Guy, No. 2750.

³ To Du Peyrou, No. 2791; with Graffenreid, Nos. 2793 to 2796 inclusive; to Mme de Verdelin, No. 2797.

⁴ Cf. from Mme de Verdelin, No. 2584, *C.G.*, vol. xiii, p. 231.

with a great and honest philosopher, David Hume, and it created more need for him to justify himself before the world.

Thus far he had refrained from issuing any works explicitly for his own defense, though he had not been able to stay his hand from supplying others with material, in the cases of Vernes and Montmollin. He had, indeed, set out to tell the truth concerning himself in *Confessions* which were to appear after his death. His original intention had been to make an honest examination of his own life, as enjoined on all men by Socrates. 'In my project I would do something unique, and I venture to say, a thing truly fine. I am making it so important an object that I shall consecrate the rest of my life to it. . . .'¹ But the work so philosophically conceived came to take an inevitable turn to the defensive, in the course of his experience in England and France. And the *Confessions* themselves were not sufficient for his apology; there had to follow others, the *Dialogues* where Rousseau judges Jean-Jacques, and the *Réveries of a Solitary Walker*.

That final period of tribulation for Rousseau was not altogether one of looking backwards or writing apologies for his own life. He was not himself without a cause. And his cause continued to be that of liberty. Those 'indocile ideas' were taking their course with him as he went from place to place seeking peace and rest. Among the fancies that haunted him in his wanderings were the 'agreeable chimeras' from the tracing of which the bigotry and persecution of men had taken him. Thus it happened, that despite the turmoil of life and apologetics, Rousseau applied himself to his *Project for Corsica*, and managed to compose something representing his last thoughts on politics.

He had the vision for Corsica of a free people who might be self-contained in their economy, and fortunately exempt from the worst vices and prejudices of other nations. His fancy was there retracing the lineaments of a Platonic Commonwealth, or of an ancient democracy on the lines described by Aristotle and Montesquieu. 'Commerce produces riches; but agriculture assures men of liberty.' And agriculture here means not simply the tilling of the soil but 'the general spirit of the nation' that is fundamentally concerned with life close to the land. Then money is not so all-important, nor city-life and all its demoralisations. 'The fundamental principle of the prosperity of the nation . . . is that all the world must live and no one is to enrich him-

¹ To Rey, Nos. 2528, 2608. Cf. Correspondence with Duclos, vol. xii, Nos. 2282, 2379, and with Du Peyrou, vol. xiii, Nos. 2518, 2555, 2561 (p. 194).

self.'¹ This means a restriction of the right of private property: 'Far from wanting the State to be poor, I would like it, on the contrary, to have everything, and each person to have his share in the common goods, in proportion to his services. . . . But without entering into speculations which take me far from my purpose, it is sufficient to make my intention clear at this point; it is not absolutely to destroy private property, because that is impossible, but to confine it within very narrow limits, to give it a measure, a rule, a control that will restrain it, direct it, subject it, and hold it ever subordinate to the public good. In a word, I want the property of the State to be as great, as powerful, and that of the citizens as little, as feeble, as possible. There you have the reason why I avoid putting it in things of which the private possessor is too much the master; such things as money and silver which one can easily conceal from public inspection.'²

The 'agreeable chimera' in this *Project for Corsica* was the moralist's belief that men, if they are not afflicted with the curse of the love of money and all its related artificial values, can live rightly amongst themselves by virtue of their natural interests. In a small island 'republic' the inspection of the public can be a reality, and it will hold the individual to his duty and assure the liberty and right of every one.

This *Project* was, however, incomplete. It was rendered futile for practical purposes by the diplomatic events of the year 1768 which abolished the independence of the little island State. It remained in manuscript, a record of the ideas of one who had more faith than ever in the Republic of his earliest dreams.

A few years later the cause of liberty again drew him away from preoccupation with his own concerns and memories, when a call came, in 1771, from certain patriots of Poland, to be their legislator. He worked hard at this task and finished his *Considerations on the Government of Poland and its Projected Reform* the very next year, only to see it rendered impracticable by another brutal stroke of European diplomacy, the partition of Poland.

The reform of Poland was a more exacting task than that constitution for Corsica, because Poland was a large nation that had already acquired the vices and prejudices of the rest of Europe. The patriots of Poland laid the blame for the anarchy of their country on several of their native institutions, such as the *liberum veto*, the right of any one member of the Diet to negative any action, and the practice of 'confederation' which was resorted to in order to get action in case of extremity. And the Poles were looking hopefully to a strong monarchy as their salvation.

¹ Vaughan, vol. ii, p. 330.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 337-8.

But Rousseau, believing still in the efficacy of general agreements, pacts, leagues, confederations, was loath to condemn where they condemned, and certainly unwilling to sponsor a monarchical polity. He spoke up, therefore, on behalf of the historical practices and institutions of that people. And in his *Considerations* on the reform he directed attention, particularly, to the basic, moral questions.

'To put the Law really above man is a problem of politics which I compare to that of squaring the circle in geometry. Solve that problem well, and the government founded on the solution will be good and without abuse. But until then, rest assured that when you think you are making the Laws rule, it is really men who will do the ruling.'¹

How to make the laws supreme is the great political art, which one must learn from the practice of those ancient legislators whom Rousseau had so long admired. 'All sought bonds which attached the citizens to their country and to each other, and they found those bonds in their particular usages—in religious ceremonies which, by their nature, were exclusive and national; in games which kept the citizens very much together; in sports which increased not only their vigor and strength, but also their pride and self-esteem; in spectacles which, recalling the history of their ancestors, their misfortunes, their virtues, their victories, interested their feelings and inflamed them with a lively emulation, and attached them strongly to that country with which one never ceased to occupy them.' By such 'mere child's play' the bonds of fellowship and community were forged. And whenever this happens, the people set real store by the laws of their common life with each other. 'They will obey the laws, and will not elude them, because the laws will be suitable to them and will have the internal assent of their will.'²

But these bonds of common sentiment and action must be formed in the very beginning of life. 'All, being equal by the constitution of the State, ought to be brought up together and in the same manner.' This means that a public education is the first of all 'considerations' in a true Politics. If parents are perchance allowed the right to educate their children privately or at home, they ought still to be required to send them out to play with the other children, 'all together and in public, in such wise that there is always a common goal to which all aspire, and which excites their competition and rivalry . . . for it is not only a question here of forming a robust constitution and rendering them agile and supple, but also of getting them accustomed

¹ *Considerations*, *ibid.*, pp. 426–7.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 432.

in good season to some rule, to equality, to fraternity, to rivalries, to living under the eyes of their fellow-citizens and desiring public approbation'. Thus, besides acquiring a love of their country and its laws, they will come to value 'the truly personal qualities of their fellows'.¹

Incidentally, this principle rules out absolutely all slavery. 'The law of nature, the sacred, imprescriptible law which speaks to the heart of man and his reason, that law does not allow one to restrict the legislative authority or to have laws obliging any one who has never voted in person on the matters. . . . One never violates that sacred law with impunity; and the feeble condition to which so great a nation now finds itself reduced is the result of that feudal barbarity which cuts off from the body of the State its most numerous and oftentimes its soundest part. . . . Polish nobles, be more than that, be men! Then alone will you yourselves be happy and free. But don't flatter yourselves you are so, as long as you would keep your brethren in irons.'²

All ought to participate both in the making of the law that governs all and in the maintenance of that law. 'In order that the administration shall be strong and good, and proceed rightly toward its goal, all the executive power ought to be in the same hands. But it will not suffice for these hands to change. It must be so arranged, if it is possible, that they do not act except under the eyes of the legislator, and that it is always this body which guides them. There you have the true secret if they are not to usurp the legislative authority.' But what can be done in a nation so large as the modern State? The assembly cannot possibly be that of the whole body of people—it must be, at best, that of their deputies or representatives, a fact Rousseau had once refused to admit in the *Social Contract*. Here the situation had to be accepted. And a new problem was to be faced: how prevent the deputies from making common cause with any private interests? The best 'means is to require the representatives to follow their instructions exactly, and to render a severe accounting of their conduct at the Diet to their constituents. . . . That examination is of the greatest importance: one could not possibly give too much attention to it, or note its effects with too much care. It must be so devised that at every word the deputy says in the Diet, at every step he takes, he shall be seeing himself prospectively under the eyes of his constituents, and that he shall feel the influence their judgment will have on his projects of advancement. . . . This control is absolutely necessary

¹ *Considérations*, ch. 4 ('Éducation'), pp. 439–441.

² *Ibid.*, ch. 5 ('Vice Radical'), p. 442.

to hold them to their duty and prevent all corruption from whatever quarter it comes.' Some inconveniences would be entailed by this procedure, but 'they are not to be weighed over against the immense advantage of having the law never anything but the real expression of the will of the nation'. It is also inconvenient to allow the unhampered discussion of public affairs in the legislative assembly, with the result that certain parties always press for a restriction of that right of free discussion. 'Keeping order is a good thing, but liberty is much better; and the more you hem liberty in with forms, the more chance these forms will offer for usurpation. . . . It is a great evil to have long and futile harangues that waste precious time, but it is a very much greater one if a good citizen does not dare to speak when he has useful things to say.'¹

The same principle ought to be applied to the control of the administration or to any order of persons who enjoy prerogatives in the State. 'There remains for me to develop here the means which I believe to be the strongest, the most powerful, and indeed, even unfailing in its success, if it be well applied: this is to arrange matters in such a way that all the citizens are unceasingly conscious of being in the eyes of the public, that none advances and succeeds except by the wish of the nation, and that, finally, from the lowest noble, from even the meanest servant, if possible, to the King, all should depend so much on the public esteem that one could do nothing, acquire nothing, succeed in nothing without it. . . . Thus all is tied up in the State, and from the lowest private person to the highest order, no one sees any way of advancing save by the route of duty and the public approbation.'²

'Men are what we have made them' was the thought which had made him the critic of society, and it was the last thought he had as to the remedy. With his eyes fastened on Greek democracies, and on the Republic of Geneva whence he had sprung, he had pictured men assembling to form a society under the rule of law and their own general will, and he had conceived that they might set up their own government and keep it accountable to themselves. But he learned from Geneva itself that powers of domination will arise in even such a society, powers commercial or political or religious, which manage to silence the assembly of the people and to crush any protesting individual. What are men advised to do then? Revolt? That solves nothing; it weakens the State and leaves it at the mercy

¹ Ibid., ch. 7 ('Moyens de maintenir la constitution'), *ibid.*, pp. 446-61.

² Ibid., chs. 12, 14, pp. 491-2, 506-7.

of the outsider. Perhaps the astonishing practice of the Poles could be instituted, of having the constituent bodies of the land 'confederate' and exercise an 'executive power' even against the executive itself, since 'extreme evils make violent remedies necessary'.¹ Rousseau, the wrathful victim of Geneva's government, dallied a little with this thought. But it was not consonant with his chief aim which was to achieve all results as far as possible by the way of agreement rather than by that of opposition or division of power or any external checks and balances. The inspection and opinion of the public is the thing. It is a mighty force of both incentive and restraint. It is a power able to control the passions of petty interest and egoism which tend to arise in the hearts of men. It works even in a society where such things as money may have prestige and predominance. Given a community where the public opinion and sentiment are strong, the political institutions will attain their end and men will at last dwell together in society without making themselves into evil-doers and oppressors one of another.

Thus a true Politics looks first to the education of the community, and then to its political institutions. The 'mere child's play', as it seems, is symbolic of all that ought to follow in the career of mankind. The playing together of children in their earliest years is the foundation of all community, and of the spirit of justice, equality and liberty. It is the basis, too, of an appreciation of others as individuals with a worth of their own which is to be respected as that of oneself. These moral values are further developed in later life by such things as common festivals and meetings. With such a common experience it is possible for the political assembling of the people to count for something, to have and to express a common sentiment and opinion which can direct the whole State to its end, the good of all.

'The democratic constitution is certainly the masterpiece of the political art: but the more the artifice of it is admirable, the less is it possible for all eyes to penetrate.'² Since writing his farewell message to Geneva, Rousseau had tried to discover more of that admirable artifice. He sketched the plan of an economic communism for the little island of Corsica, whose economy was designed to bring to every one the basic goods of the land, and to see that no one would ever be destitute, but that all should enjoy true abundance. And in the case of Poland he worked out a democracy in the federal form, which he also thought 'a masterpiece of politics', and he described the bonds

¹ *Considérations*, ch. 9, p. 470.

² *Lettres de la Montagne*, *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 230.

of union which are deeper than political bonds, and formed long before the will of man has anything to do in the matter.¹ It is not surprising, in the light of these late experiments of his mind, that Rousseau should have remarked, concerning his own *Social Contract*, that it was a book which needed to be written over again.²

¹ *Considérations*, *ibid.*, p. 470.

² Dussaulx, *De mes rapports avec J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 102 (cited by Vaughan, vol. 1, p. 86 n.).

CONCLUSION

'Qu' ai-je fait ici-bas?'

(*Réveries*, Hachette, vol. ix, p. 333.)

THE great law-givers, Lycurgus and Numa, told of in the Lives of Plutarch, were among the boyhood admirations of Rousseau; and Moses of the Old Testament could scarcely have been absent from the fancies of that youth of Geneva. It was part of his growing egoism to dream of playing such a grand role himself, before he even appreciated the need of it in human affairs. If anything, indeed, he had too exalted a belief in the goodness of man. The preachings on sin touched him more as eloquent preachings than as doctrine. Nor was he affected by the abstract ideas of good and evil so much as by the personal sentiments of those with whom he found himself. He had a remarkable sensitiveness to people and opinion, as remarkable as that to Nature, and these susceptibilities were the source at once of his true pleasures and of many mortifications and sufferings. A love of romance dwelt alongside the love of the heroic. And all these things were in his heart before the age of understanding.

An awakening from his childhood, the 'sleep of reason', came after a long vagrancy. His first attention then was to himself: he was the Narcissus of his own story. But it was a deeply 'concerned' self-love. The knowledge of having wasted his young life had turned him in upon himself and away from outer things; and it sent him to books which described the sinner to himself and then held forth a gospel of redemption. Religious philosophy sent him to search for the truth within, and to imitate the Socrates of Plato's immortal pages. And, believing then that knowledge means virtue and happiness, he studied science and philosophy. He was visionary still.

Men who wrestle with angels bear the mark of their unequal contest for life: Rousseau encountered 'the divine Plato', Plato the moralist. For the moralist is one who criticises severely the very things he loves. Master of language and its power to move men, he may turn the very art itself out of his perfect State, because it is more readily used for effect than for truth. Delighting in the amenities of civilised life, he may purge his Republic of them all, for the sake of simple, vigorous, honest living. He is likely to disparage all the glories and institutions of his day, because he values so highly the uttermost perfection of human nature, unrealised in that day. His insight cleaves to the ideal all the while his words paint the evil of the actual. Nor is the moralist simply the philosopher telling a hard truth. Knowing

the dangers in himself, and that he can be nothing apart from others, he strains every effort to move men generally to turn from the fatal way to a new order of existence. He may even take very practical measures, in education or politics; he may become the instructor of a Prince or the creator of the constitution of a State. Such was the figure of Plato, handed down by a long tradition, and that tradition reached Rousseau through Plutarch and various modern Christian writers such as Father Lamy, Father Malebranche, Bossuet and Fénelon. And thus Rousseau's own career became an inevitable 'imitation' of the supreme moralist of ancient days.

Plato taught him first that Lycurgus was great because he gave the people of his own country a new discipline through laws, so that they might grow up in perfect virtue. What more noble glory than this of having whole communities of good men for one's disciples! And was it not, as Plato said, nobler far than the work of Homer with his fine words? However, the modern world offered no chance for such high performance, and so the first vision, of being a 'legislator', faded for lack of possible application. Then the art of letters seemed still a very fine thing, especially if it could be cultivated to the inimitable perfection of the contemporary Voltaire. Rousseau took to writing verse and dramatic plays and music, and he cherished the ambition to make his mark in the realm of the arts. But the principle gleaned from Plato's account of Lycurgus haunted him: 'Men are what we have made them.' The forming of men, and good men—that was, after all, the supreme achievement. And Plato's own example was a continual suggestion of ways to realise such an ideal. He who had aimed at bringing kings or rulers to the wisdom of Socrates contented himself with the business of educating the youth of his land in science, politics, philosophy. That role of educator, at least, was a practical one. And so it happened that Rousseau took a position as tutor, and he spent as much time, it seems, on the theory as on the practice of his office, composing a *Project for Education* in which he made good use of the *Laws* of Plato. But the subordination of his post in a wealthy household made it irksome. He gave it up in order to try his hand directly at political service, as secretary to the Ambassador at Venice. That, however, proved likewise an inglorious career. His ambition diminished. The *Encyclopædia* was being planned by his friends in Paris, and since it was a work in the nature of public instruction, he, thwarted in his own visionary aims, was happy to be able to throw in his lot with those who cultivated science and arts and letters.

The attitude of acceptance of the ordinary ambitions of men spoiled somewhat the integrity of his spirit. He followed the ways of the world. He was less fit to meet the actual problems of morality than others who had never had visions. His companionship with Thérèse Le Vasseur was not complete, and he evaded the duties of raising their family. Work alone partly saved him, work with the pen which was his only equipment in the struggle for a subsistence. The career to which he was committed had its damaging effects on his religious beliefs, which were certainly shaken, though by no means destroyed, by the prevailing philosophy of Paris. He had the gift, however, of realising his own experience and knowing the state of his moral being, and he craved a liberation from those failings and weaknesses that could not be hidden from his own conscience. The principle he had learned stuck in his puzzled mind: 'Men are what we have made them'—and it followed, thence, that his revulsion was not against himself alone but against the whole order of society that could make him what he had become. The chance to write for the prize, in 1749, was a moment of salutary release. The moralist broke out and found his calling, a calling, moreover, where his ambition to cut a figure in the world of letters was united with his real convictions. He could use his pen to preach against the injustice, the slavery, the deceit, the hard and mean pursuit of selfish interest, and the inequalities. His *First Discourse* was done in a vein of radical criticism, and it seemed utter paradox, because the true order of values was not yet disclosed. A melancholy portraiture of mankind was all that could be seen, and even Rousseau himself admitted that he had no remedy to offer.

Nevertheless he was working hard to find the way out for mankind. He sought to come closer to the problem of evil in human life. He studied long and carefully what the modern writers had said about their civilisation, its injustices and its wars. Those readings and meditations were extensive and profound enough to have done credit to a scholar with nothing else to do but peruse and absorb; but he was earning his living besides. He mastered book after book on law, politics, war and peace, economics, and on anything else relevant to the question of human society, intent on finding a clue to man's redemption. The ferment of his thought was recorded in various tentative writings. Certain traditional questions troubled him: the questions about 'the state of nature', 'the general society of mankind', 'the social contract', the 'civil state', 'sovereignty', 'government'. He even had to find his own terms amidst a confusion of influences upon him from ancient and modern discussions. And

the fundamental problem itself was not yet stated, nor any constructive plan made definite.

The occasion of writing the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* enabled Rousseau to propound the essential question and see a way of remedy. It was also, fortunately, an escape from his preoccupation with himself, and the mark of a more resolute life according to his own principles. When he scored the unjustified inequality, it was not simply because he, Jean Jacques Rousseau, had been made to suffer injustice, tyranny, humiliation, at the hands of his betters, but because he had been convinced by other ardent spirits, such as Fénelon, of the evils of monarchy and the whole system of inequalities bound up with it. When he described man in 'the state of nature', it was not himself, though he often liked to think so later, but it was the nature of man as he had learned it from many moralists before him. Despite the feeling shown in that *Discourse*, the discussion itself was objective. He was there, as he said in the late *Dialogues*, 'the historian of human nature'. But it was a history in two distinct strands, though they were continually intermingled: one the course of nature when going true to itself, the other the actual, erring, melancholy course of mankind toward a self-inflicted fate. By nature man is intended for a life of perfect balance and harmony, integrity within and peace without, so that human society ought in the end to be a truly general society of all mankind. And man is meant to be good to his fellows as to himself, to show compassion and fellow-feeling, nay more, to act freely and of his own will on behalf of humanity. In the actual course of history man departs from this true order. The freedom to go his own way enables him to disregard Nature; the reflective power by which he chooses his own course turns him to his own exclusive interests; the passion for self dominates whilst the concern for others diminishes; invidious, unjust, inhumane passions reign, and society reveals nothing but deeds of oppression, warfare, and slavery. To Rousseau the fundamental problem was now apparent. It was to set men free from their own tyranny, tyranny within as well as without. It was to correct that selfish will and release the natural sentiments from its thwarting control. It was to make human action generally fair, just, righteous; and society a scene of liberty and even-handed equality. Though the *Discourse on Inequality* appeared first and foremost to be a downright condemnation of the existing order, this constructive solution, or the plan of one, was not far behind.

The establishment of fair dealing had been the objective of all true politics according to the ancient philosophers. In Plato's *Republic* the State is administered for justice and the good of all,

with a will in authority that pays regard to the claims of every one without favor or exception. That is how Rousseau read his Plato. And he adopted 'the Form of the Republic' as the model for the making over of all political institutions. If the 'republican' principle were established, then men would be just, and they could not do evil one to another, and their lawless egoism would be rectified. This political remedy Rousseau seized upon with an intellectual passion. And he projected a comprehensive treatise on *Political Institutions*, to equal the work of Plato and to supplant the false doctrines of the modern writers like Grotius who were willing to speak for the principle of monarchy.

The problem was to bring about a subordination of the will of every man to the general will. If every one followed the principle that the general good is paramount, then no one would ever be guilty of the brutal tyrannies and vices inspired by an egregious self-interest. The article on *Political Economy* expressed this ideal and the hope that it might be realised. It read like an appeal to the rulers of the day to make that general will their policy, and to see to it that others in the community they governed followed that policy in their respective spheres of life.

But this was only the beginning of an extensive argument. Rousseau faced some questions in his own thought about this solution. How is it possible to subordinate to the general will 'men as they are?' It is obvious that the general will of the human race is not *ipso facto* authoritative for every one of its members. It must be put into force. And who is there entitled to enforce it upon men, to force them to be just? The spirit of liberty was so strong in Rousseau that he demanded the solution of this question above all. He knew well the futility of undertaking any vital transformation of the human will, and consequently of the whole nature of man, by the use of coercion—that was ruled out absolutely from every remedy he was to entertain concerning this great problem of evil. And nothing would be right or effectual in practice, unless it yielded a very real freedom. Hence the outward control of political authority over men must really be the expression of an inward will in the body of the State. The governance of men must be a self-government; the laws to compose their differences and hold them all straight must be their own laws; and the very society itself, where these laws rule, must be actually of their own making, through some convention or agreement amongst themselves. Only so would the society and the will expressive of its general interest be so real to the individuals that they would feel *obliged* to recognise its rightful authority. The first act of salvation must be, then, a free act of association to accept a common

law and governance. This was the meaning Rousseau discerned, after profound and silent meditation during his walks in the country, in that term which he had inherited from the modern tradition in politics, 'the social contract'.

In working out this thought he encountered certain accepted maxims of politics and philosophy which absolutely excluded the very possibility of his 'republican' system. His vision, however, enabled him to overcome the force of those prejudices. Man is what man has made him—now, if men can be brought to recognise the evil of their present state, they can surely be moved to make it good by meeting together over their difficulties and agreeing upon the remedies. So long as such a method of dealing is pursued there can be nothing but benefit resulting, for where a principle is found in common there is liberty and equality for all, and nothing is greater than these goods. Nor, indeed, is anything secure without them, for otherwise all is left to brute force. It was in following the logic of his own idea, against the weight of tradition, that Rousseau won his spurs as a thinker. The result was an achievement in moral philosophy as well as in politics. He revealed the meaning and the force of obligation in human affairs, and he gave ethics a new direction which it was the work of more methodical philosophers afterwards to explore. At the same time he defined the idea of the State and Sovereignty in forms which subsequent thought could use, precisely because they were more suited to the actual aspirations of the coming day. These things were all accomplished, unknown even to close friends, in the first version of his first essay for the book on *Political Institutions*.

And in that essay, on *The Form of the Republic*, the vision of the Legislator was portrayed, a person in a role more truly glorious than any vouchsafed to man.

And Rousseau's ambition was not confined to the reform of the State. It reached out to the whole society of nations. The warlike status of international affairs was wrong, and it had much to do with what was wrong with government within each body politic. The general state of Europe ought to be an order of peace with justice. Thus the projects of Abbé de St. Pierre, projects for the restraining of militant monarchies, seemed worth rewriting, even if they proved to be too revolutionary for publication in France. Surely, however, the principles of right for the civil State were good for the world at large. The vast nations of the modern world certainly ought to be controlled by an authority of their own institution, and the weaker ones should find strength enough to survive by recourse, amongst themselves, to leagues or federations. These were the further thoughts of

Rousseau, but they needed longer meditation. And meantime, the book on *Political Institutions* failed to advance.

Another project took its place for a time. Perhaps the remedy for the troubles of mankind was not being applied early enough in human experience to be effectual. Once men have already acquired the passions of greed, vanity, domination, their simplest impulses of affection or generosity are inhibited, their sentiments are perverted, fear comes where love would naturally dwell, and, of course, all is in disorder. It is indeed hard to control the egoistic will of man at such a late day. Why not prevent the rise of such a will? The wise Plato had begun not with political reforms but with early education. The selfish passions all have a beginning; they are not in the least inborn and inevitable, though Hobbes had seemed to think so, and those, too, who preached original sin. But there had been far too much said about the badness of human nature. All the wrongful passions have an origin and a history which can be traced in the experience of man. Change that course, cultivate the impulses and sentiments out of which the reflective powers themselves develop, lift the inhibitions on spontaneous feeling, guard against the premature exciting of interests, and the nature of man will blossom forth in due time with a natural goodness—perfect in impulse, perfect in the harmony of sentiment, and perfect as a will that regards others equally with oneself, which is nothing but the law of Christian charity. An education of character means deliverance from evil and the freedom of man. Here was a second way of remedy, for the disclosing of which another comprehensive book was being planned, a treatise on Education.

And still another work was in view, which had regard to the material conditions that affect the development of moral character. The human organism is a body acting and reacting with other bodies. As the Greeks and many wise moderns had taught, an ill or defective body can make the mind itself feeble, and the will tyrannous. It was important, therefore, to discover the proper physical regimen to enable the will to be healthy and balanced and strong, because in such strength there is the condition of virtue. And in this connection Rousseau intended to exalt the value of life out-of-doors, away from cities, away from the material preoccupations of men, life spent in Nature, enjoying and meditating the works of God.

The body of work which Rousseau definitely laid out for himself at the Hermitage was to be a veritable Encyclopedia of his own, single-handed composing. There were studies of political institutions, war and peace, government, education,

morality, and the physical conditions of human life. Nothing was yet designed on the subject of religion, but the interest was there, and the experience imminent. The greatest effort had been put into the political studies, and it had been long continued. By the spring of 1756 Rousseau was fatigued, and also baffled, by some of his problems. The situation and his temperament lured his mind to other projects for relief. The theme of his fancy, after being so long heroic, turned romantic.

In the *Discourse on Inequality* there had been a fond lingering on the ideal of a conjugal life, and the family, as the happiest state for mankind. This was partly in the nature of a confession, after missing, through his own fault, more than half those goods. It was the first realisation of the profound significance of marriage and children, and the necessity of the education that is possible in the home. These desiderata grew upon him in the period at the Hermitage when he had nothing to do, or else no energy for doing what he projected. He then indulged himself in other visions, of a perfect companionship of man and woman, and of a home of his own; and his pen made these thoughts into a romance. And the dwelling on the thought made him ready for an infatuation which cost him friends, and humiliated him to the depths. Yet he knew what was happening and made a story of it, and in the story he told the moral lessons he had learned—the great good of fidelity, the freedom that comes of conquering one's passion and heeding a law within, the sanctity of marriage, and above all, the necessity of religion to the morals of mankind. These lessons converted the self-indulgent romancing about Julie into the moralising *Nouvelle Héloïse*. And there was a hint that after all one must come to the religious remedy for salvation.

But the article on *Geneva* by D'Alembert intervened to rouse him in defense of the Republic on which all his hopes were fixed. He discoursed then to his heart's content on the domestic life and morals of such a society, the proper relations of the sexes, the influence of the theatre on morals—a remarkably acute development of Plato's teaching about the imitative art and its playing upon the emotions and general effect on the personality. In this *Letter* were suggested the true means of improving the virtue of men through life in the family, through education, through healthy, outdoor, public recreations and games, and through religion. Here Rousseau delineated the primary fabric of the moral life of men. His interest, indeed, was becoming more and more engrossed with the intimate forces that influence man and determine his destiny. Returning afterwards to finish his novel, he continued there teaching the values he seemed to

remember from his youth, though they were much transformed in his fancy through the lessons he had learned for himself in Plutarch and Plato.

The question of religion was coming decisively to the fore. At Paris scepticism had troubled him. It is significant that in all his writing from 1749 to 1756 he had not proposed a religious solution. Yet it was the obvious remedy to suggest for the case, as he himself had stated it. If men have come to regard and love themselves so exclusively, teach them, nay more, preach to them the gospel of human charity, the love of others, and raise it up in them so strongly that their lives are made whole and sound again in spirit. But apparently the making of men into true Christians was deemed only God's work not man's; and the moralist might pray for the event, but he could not surely assume it in making his own plan of salvation. However, there was one thing to be publicly taught in this matter, the principle of tolerance. This was the essential point of the letter to Voltaire, although Rousseau also professed, for his own part, a faith in the soul of man and in Providence. After that he became increasingly concerned over the irreligious influences of Voltaire and the philosophers upon his cherished Geneva, and he felt that the sceptics and materialists, many of them his old friends, had become as dogmatic and intolerant as the bigots. Something needed to be said on the matter of faith as well as on liberty. And the religious seriousness which had come over him with his personal humiliation, and the sense of inner weakness in himself, made such an expression of his sentiments imperative for him, especially this, that without religion human morality is insufficient to meet the demands of life upon men. These thoughts were first poured out in the novel, *Julie*; from them it was but a step to the ampler version, the *Profession of Faith* in the *Émile*.

That treatise on *Education* gathered into itself the whole of Rousseau's moral philosophy. It was his final reckoning, on all counts, with the tendencies of the age, to which he had been long opposed. It made explicit the strand of the ideal that underlay all his criticism of man and civilisation. It described the true course of nature for mankind, and introduced only incidentally that other, dark strand of the actual order of things, just enough to show what it is the perfect life must avoid. Plato had taught that the soul has a certain nature of its own, and a way of ascending to the love of wisdom. This view seemed to be confirmed by the studies of Buffon in the Natural History of man. Thus guided by modern science as well as by ancient philosophy, Rousseau set out to portray the veritable destination

of man on earth when he is really free from wrong and premature influences. The indeterminate 'love of oneself' is seen to include a 'love of others' from the start, first as instinct, then as sentiment when the intention of others to care for oneself is appreciated. And in the family, where the training is right and happiness real, the natural virtues of the affections come to develop. One is good to others without the consciousness of being good; one practices justice toward others without the explicit idea of justice. Thus 'the love of virtue', too, is a natural development of the original 'love of oneself'. And though the even progress of man toward his own perfection and happiness is disturbed by the advent of sex it is, nevertheless, not a 'fall', for the right love of another is a concentration of affection and a corresponding devotion and generosity which brings out more that is essentially good in human nature. Virtue then becomes a moral achievement, an affair of the will. For the man who loves demands a requital of affection and a preference of himself over all others; and he compares himself with them; and he inevitably acquires that concentrated regard for himself which is known as 'self-love'. Yet even so he is not lost. For if he lives in the right order of political society, he has a love of country and acknowledges bonds to others and the sovereignty of the general will over all. Then the obligations of the citizen are natural to man. They are virtues of the will, and they spell a truer freedom for him. But there is more than the life of society to consider. Man seeks a perfect freedom from earthly trammels: he is interested in ultimate happiness, perfection, liberation, and so his thought runs to the immortality of the soul and the infinite goodness and power of God. Religious experience is natural at this season. And it is very needful, because man as a social being, be he even the good citizen, always contains great passions, great ambitions, great temptations to do wrong, and an unbounded self-esteem and pride. At this stage of his self-assertion he must be made humble to be held to the right course. This cannot be done by any man or men—it is not a politic art, nor even that of the educator, but the work of Divinity alone. It comes to pass when a man chances to meet with some one in his life who can assist him in the way of understanding and elicit from his soul, in confession, as it were, the inevitable tribute to the Eternal Being. And thus the 'love of oneself' includes in its ample reach 'the love of God' as well as the love of country and humanity and virtue. It was for this lesson Rousseau put into his book the *Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar*. The supreme achievement of human nature is religion.

Yet Rousseau had no intention of disparaging what men can do for themselves in society. 'Men are what we have made them', so he had begun, and he believed much would still be possible to them if they lived according to the policy of the *Social Contract*. For the ideas of his book on *Political Institutions* were not abandoned when the project itself was. His thought could not be left thus unfinished, and it propelled him into a rewriting of his first essay on 'political right'. It contained a great theme which ought to be followed out: everything is right for men if they come together at every exigency of their life in society and take action by mutual agreement and without any duress on the part of any one. Let them assemble, in the first instance, to create their body politic by a general pact and to set up the sovereignty of the general will; let them assemble to appoint those who are to be their agents in government; and let them meet ever and again, periodically, or upon occasion of some special emergency, to pass upon the services rendered the public by the executive officers, to hold them to an accounting, or to maintain the supremacy of the law and the will of the whole body. Perhaps, indeed, the people might even assemble to determine what religion is essential to their common life. Thus the *Social Contract* completed the demonstration of the great resources men have when they act in common and respect the principle of liberty.

All the solutions Rousseau had ever entertained were now stated. But his argument was not ended. Geneva, the country of his idealisation as a Republic, liked not what he said about religion. Even his own disciples, too, seemed to have difficulty with the final chapter of the *Social Contract*. So he needed to justify his principles of politics and religion, and in doing so he had some particular lessons to give them and the world at large, lessons on tolerance and freedom. And thus came the works, *Letter to Beaumont* and *Letters Written from the Mountain*.

Unexpectedly the great role of Legislator was at length thrust upon him. The dream of his youth was suddenly true. But the man who then tried to play his part in European affairs—and if he was mad, then Plato was also mad when he went to Sicily on the same errand of statesmanship—was not doing so in grand style and with much honor, but as a disavowed citizen, driven from place to place, and nowhere allowed to make a home until it was too late for him to be at home anywhere on earth. These were years full of real trouble and distress, also of wild fancies and fears of persecution, when he was fighting for his spiritual existence. The soul was seeking cover and refreshment yet could not recognise a haven when it was found,

nor friends in those who proferred it. The way was thus one of exhausted wandering, often wandering of the mind as well as the body. Fortunately, it all ended in an attitude of serene surrender to Nature. But the deciphering of this epoch, after the departure from Môtiers in September 1765 until the end in 1778, and of the autobiographical writings which relate to it, this is all matter enough for a separate story.

The career of Rousseau resulted in his acquiring many names and reputes. He was the author of books on education, politics, and religion. He was called a seditious fellow, a rhetorician, a man of paradox, a hypocrite, a madman. He said things which gave color to the opinion that he was a sentimentalist and one hostile to all reason. He himself only wanted to be called 'the citizen', being proud beyond words of that title. Once Diderot, in a teasing mood, wrote him: 'a strange citizen a hermit is!' Yet not so strange after all, for a man who thinks alone and for himself, if he does not stay too far from life and affairs, draws wisdom from sources other than his books and the conversation of men. He has visions of a right order of life, right in relation to other men, to Nature and to God. He makes efforts to put these true ideas into effect, and if in doing so, he betrays weakness, he is the more severely judged because he has taught men to know what real strength is. Those friends who had insight, and those who were not too impatient with him, recognised what manner of man he was when they spoke of him as 'the moralist'.

APPENDIX I

CHAPTER IV

THE argument of this Chapter assumes that both the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* and the fragment originally entitled *Que l'état de guerre naît de l'état social* were contemporary with the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*, &c., that is—written in the period between the end of 1753 and the time when Rousseau turned over his manuscript of the last-named to Rey, in October 1754. The piece on language was intended as a Note for the *Appendix* which was assembled by Rousseau after his return from Geneva—see *Annales*, vol. xv, p. 77, n. 1; Masson, *ibid.*, vol. ix, pp. 45–9; Lanson, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. xxix, 325, n. 7.

The fragment on war is assigned by Vaughan (p. 284) to the period between 1753 and 1755, and even possibly a later date (*Annales*, vol. xv, p. 63, cites Vaughan, incorrectly, as favoring a date about 1751–2, and ignores utterly his commitment on p. 284, above cited). One thing that seems to preclude a date earlier than 1753 is the remorseful words about the degradation of persons in society who regard the birth of their children as an affliction—Rousseau's own 'crimes' in that respect must have been sufficiently in the *past* to have permitted of such reflections, or 'confessions'. There is, moreover, a greater maturity in the psychology of his argument about man and society than in the *Discours* itself.

It seems reasonable to suppose that both the essay on language and the incomplete one on war were begun independently of the writing for the prize contest and that they could never be incorporated 'without too great digression', and further that they were, perhaps, not finished then but ran on to a slightly later date. They contribute, therefore, to the formation of the theory for the *Institutions politiques*, without being an integral part of the plan of that work.

The fragment *Sur le luxe, le commerce, et les arts* which is cited in close connexion with the fragment on war, I believe to have been composed at about the same time, that is, in 1754. It is plainly a criticism of Melon—in the vein of Montesquieu; see R. Hubert, *La Formation des idées politiques de Rousseau*, in *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie*, Oct.–Dec. 1927, p. 415; also Rousseau *et l'Encyclopédie*, Paris, 1928, Gamber, p. 77. The two 'famous writers' on luxury and commerce might, of course, have been Hume or Mandeville and Melon. Vaughan thought the two writers were Helvétius and Diderot (vol. 1, p. 344, n. 1) and consequently dated the fragment as late as 1762. It is supposed, on this assumption, to have dealt with a question proposed in April 1762 by the Société économique de Berne: 'Quel peuple a jamais été le plus heureux?' But Rousseau definitely answered that question from Berne in another piece, p. 325 f. It is hardly reasonable to assume that he composed two utterly distinct replies. Nor is it necessary to go so far afield to seek an occasion for writing such an essay. Melon's *Lettre sur le luxe* had been given great publicity by Voltaire, and it was under fire from Montesquieu. Rousseau himself had written against luxury but a few years before, and was still in the train of the criticism levelled at him and therefore disposed to have his say on the subject. This fragment was only one of a sequence of writings on this topic from the year 1750. It is indeed not polemic in tone, but that character he was striving to eliminate from his work just about the time when he determined to proceed with his *Institutions politiques*. In view of all these considerations I hold that this fragment on *Luxury, Commerce and the*

Arts belongs to the various other tentatives of constructive political philosophy which were a form of preparation for the masterpiece so much at heart during the sojourn in Geneva.

APPENDIX II

CHAPTER V. *Concerning the date of composition of the article
'Économie politique'*

ON January 2nd, 1755, Rousseau wrote to Jacob Vernes at Geneva explaining that he had not yet submitted to Diderot a memoir by Vernes on the subject of *Humeur*, first, because Diderot was suffering from so much trouble at the hands of his publishers that he was on the point of abandoning the *Encyclopedia* altogether, and secondly, because 'there is still an intervening volume before arriving at the letter H'. This seems to indicate that volume five which contained D and E (though not all of E) was already completed, otherwise he would certainly have spoken of *two* intervening volumes. From this I argue that by January 1755 the articles on *Droit naturel* and *Économie politique* were written and ready to be printed in volume five which was to appear in November 1755. Volume three had been published November 1753; volume four October 1754, shortly before Rousseau's arrival in Paris. So the interval between the date of his return in October 1754 and January 1755 seems to have been that of the period of collaboration upon the two articles. Rousseau was so closely in touch with Diderot those days that he could tell others how his article, *Encyclopédie*, was composed, during an illness, and it is in that article Diderot gave unstinted praise of his friend and helper. (To Vernes, C.G., vol. ii, No. 206; also November 23, 1755, *ibid.*, No. 263.) It is, of course, entirely possible that the collaboration might have taken place prior to the departure for Geneva. The letter (cited on page 92 f.) from the *Correspondance littéraire* of August 1754 was written by someone undoubtedly acquainted with Rousseau's views if not with his actual manuscript. Off-hand it seems plausible that their collaboration on their articles had already been done and that all differences with Diderot should come after his contact with things and persons at Geneva. But the evidence is not strong enough for this hypothesis. It seems a little unlikely that Rousseau should actually be composing his *Économie politique* almost simultaneously with the *Discours*. And furthermore the intimacy of the two men seems never to have been greater or more enjoyable than precisely at this time in the autumn of 1754 and beginning of 1755. The material for volume five of the *Encyclopedia* certainly had to be made ready in that period if it were to be completed and published by November 1755. Printing took considerable time, especially for such a piece of work. Diderot himself seems to have done a great many things quite at the last moment, notably the article *Encyclopédie* itself, and he probably did the same with that on *Droit naturel*. He may, indeed, have written the latter after seeing Rousseau's own piece complete, as R. Hubert suggests (*Rousseau et l'Encyclopédie*, 1928, pp. 26-9). But by the evidence one is bound to give Diderot credit for contributing to the theory of the general will as it developed in the thought of Rousseau himself. The argument of the chapter is made on the assumption, therefore, that there was a genuine co-operation between the two writers.

APPENDIX III

CHAPTERS VII AND IX

(ON ABBÉ DE ST. PIERRE)

Abrégé du projet de paix perpétuelle. Abbé de St. Pierre (Ch. Irénée Castel).
Œuvres, Rotterdam, 1734, vol. i.

Response to Objection II: 'Si ce souverain reconnoît les autres souverains pour ses juges et pour ses supérieurs dans ses contestations avec ses voisins, ils le reconnoissent pour leur juge et pour leur supérieur dans les leurs; de sorte qu'il ne cède d'un côté qu'autant qu'il acquiert de l'autre. . . . Ainsi de ce côté-là tout est égal pour lui dans le système de la perpétuité de la paix entre les nations chrétiennes' (p. 152).

Objection III: 'Mais on doit regarder ce beau Projet plutôt comme le désir d'un bon politique, *votum non consilium*. C'est une République de Platon, et non un projet praticable; il ne sauroit plaire aux esprits corrompus du siècle, *non sumus in republicâ Platonis, sed in face Romuli*' (p. 169).

Response to Objection V: 'Il est impossible que la raison humaine ne fasse de grands progrès, dans deux ou trois siècles de paix perpétuelle: ainsi il est impossible que les rois et les ministres ne soient alors beaucoup plus éclairés sur leurs vrais et solides intérêts, qu'ils ne sont présentement dans le temps qu'ils forment l'union' (p. 183).

Response to Objection IX: 'Ils comptent donc pour beaucoup les prétentions qu'ils ont sur les états des souverains voisins, et ne comptent pour rien les prétentions de ces voisins sur différentes parties de leurs états' (p. 196).

Supplément à l'Abrégé, vol. ii.

Objection XXI: 'Ainsi on ne doit pas espérer que vos cinq articles fondamentaux ou des articles équivalens se signent par tous vos souverains avant deux cents ans, et alors il ne sera plus question de votre ouvrage, l'union de l'Europe se trouvera faite peu à peu d'elle-même par petits degrez insensibles, mais non pas tout d'un coup par la persuasion qui pouvoit leur venir de la lecture d'un bon projet' (p. 15).

Response to Objection XXII: 'En général il n'est pas douteux que les hommes ne perdent quelque chose de leur liberté apparente en entrant dans les engagements de toute société, mais il n'est pas douteux non plus que dans une société aussi avantageuse que celle-ci, ils ne gagnent cent fois, mille fois plus de commodités et d'avantages qu'ils n'y perdent du côté de la diminution de leur liberté' (p. 15).

Effets du nouveau plan du gouvernement des états, vol. vi.

Article Two restated: 'Les Aliez pour terminer entre eux leurs différens présens et à venir ont renoncé, et renoncent pour eux et pour leurs successeurs à la voie funeste et ruineuse des armes, et sont convenus de prendre toujours la voie de conciliation, par la médiation des plénipotentiaires des Aliez dans le lieu du Congrès . . .' (p. 319).

A comparison is made with the German States. 'Tous les peuples, par une protection mutuelle, se seroient conservez dans une paix solide, malgré l'injustice et l'ambition naturelle, comme les pierres d'une voûte se soutiennent mutuellement et solidement en l'air malgré leur pesanteur naturelle' (p. 326).

Projet pour perfectionner le gouvernement (vol. iii).

'Nous avons montré, que ce roi laborieux lui-même gouvernera avec beaucoup plus d'autorité, et moins de murmures, puisqu'il gouvernera avec un conseil beaucoup plus éclairé, soit pour choisir les meilleurs partis, et les meilleurs réglemens, soit pour choisir les meilleurs officiers destinez à faire exécuter les réglemens' (p. 83).

Projet de règlement sur le scrutin (Part 2).

'Ainsi la machine politique bien construite ayant une fois son mouvement elle agit d'elle-même, elle se dirige elle-même vers la plus grande utilité publique, l'État devient florissant par sa seule bonne constitution, et voilà le sublime de la politique' (p. 200).

Origine des devoirs et des droits des uns à l'égard des autres. Vol. ii, *The Law of Morality*:

'Ne faites point contre un autre ce que vous ne voudriez point qu'il fit contre vous si vous étiez à sa place, et s'il étoit à la vôtre. . . .'

Formulated as a convention:

'Pour notre bonheur mutuel, nous sommes convenus que nous ne nous causerons aucun mal, aucun tort, aucun dommage sans le réparer.'

Formulated as a maxim of prudence:

'Il est d'intérêt de tout homme, que les autres ne fassent point contre lui ce qu'ils ne voudroient pas qu'il fit contre eux. . . . ' p. 107.

'C'est de cete Loi générale dont on peut déduire toutes les autres loix générales et particulières qui sont entre les hommes, soit qu'ils vivent en société sous une police perpétuelle, et sous un arbitrage permanent, soit qu'à faute d'arbitrage permanent, ils vivent encore en guerre ou actuelle ou prochaine.'

'Ainsi on peut dire, que l'origine du Droit entre souverain et souverain, c'est cete première loi, cete première convention tacite, cete première maxime . . . et que l'origine de cete loi elle-même . . . c'est leur intérêt mutuel' (p. 109).

APPENDIX IV

[CHAPTER XIII. *The Break with Diderot*]

THE story has been told without recourse especially to either Rousseau's *Confessions* or the *Mémoires* of Mme d'Épinay, but from documents of the time when the events took place. The *Mémoires* seem in many instances really to justify Rousseau's belief of Grimm's ill will towards him and his part as an instigator of sentiment against him. They reveal Diderot *confiding* to Grimm what Rousseau had confessed to him in the strictest confidence, his passion for Mme d'Houdetot (pt. 2, chs. 8-9, vol. ii, pp. 347, 394 f.). They tell how Grimm, upon the occasion of Mme d'Épinay's departure for Geneva, showed Diderot the letter Mme d'Épinay had received from Rousseau. He boastfully says, in this story, 'I seized that occasion to demask him in the eyes of Diderot' (pt. 2, ch. 9, p. 393). Such language and behavior suggests that Grimm had been made cognisant of Rousseau's last letter of appeal to Diderot (March 2, 1758, C. G., vol. iii, No. 479), wherein he urged Diderot to consider that if he, an old friend, could be suspected of having masked his real wickedness for so many years, why might not some newer friends be likewise suspected? The *Mémoires* go on to tell that Diderot advised Rousseau to make a confession to St. Lambert and that Rousseau promised and that St. Lambert met Diderot on his return from the army and 'they explained to each other and

came to an understanding' (p. 395). And it was only because Diderot felt such extreme 'indignation', Grimm writes to Mme d'Épinay, that he let out all the details which Rousseau had confided to him (pp. 396-7). A letter from Diderot to Grimm is then cited to show the very genuine grief of Diderot at having discovered the wickedness and lying of Rousseau, as he thought (pp. 397-9). Thus it is clear that Grimm was thoroughly informed about Rousseau's confession to Diderot and the conversations of Diderot and St. Lambert; and it may well have been that his telling of the story to Mme d'Épinay did not end there. When the rumor touching Mme d'Houdetot's conduct was abroad, St. Lambert himself was unwilling to believe it emanated from Diderot himself, for he seems actually to have visited Rousseau, just a day or two after the *Preface* to the *Letter to D'Alembert* had been sent off to the publisher, in order to persuade him of Diderot's innocence. (*C. G.*, vol. iv, Oct. 10, 1758, No. 552, p. 75; and *Mémoires*, pt. 2, ch. 9, p. 413, although Mme d'Épinay mistakenly places such a visit after the publication of the *Letter* which was actually in the press at the time.) The inference from these facts seems to be that Grimm caused the trouble.

Nevertheless Diderot did 'betray' Rousseau, not so much in disabusing St. Lambert who had some right to know, if he was being deceived, as in letting Grimm into the secret. Grimm, too, was always busy, as he said himself, 'showing Diderot all the letters of Rousseau (to Mme d'Épinay, be it noted) and your (Mme d'Épinay's) replies' (p. 424). It was with some reason, perhaps, that Rousseau feared this intimacy of Grimm with Diderot, as a cause of his difficulties and troubles. It is quite possible that his judgment of Diderot as a man too easily influenced was actually correct—that was Diderot's 'weakness'. But of Diderot's honesty and upright character there can be no dispute; and Rousseau himself always 'respected' him. (To Duchesne, May 21, 1760, *C. G.*, vol. v, No. 788.)

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